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ABSTRACT

Completing the trilogy of local Amityville history written entirely by high school students using interviews, local newspapers, and documents, this journal contains 11 articles discussing the social, political, cultural, and educational scene of the community. The articles are: "De Facto Segregation in the Amityville School System," "The Civil Rights Movement in Amityville," "The Sally Thompson Case," "Physical Changes in Amityville: Post World War II-Present," "Amityville Department of Public Works," "Amityville Baylife," "The Amityville Record: Past and Present," "The Village Government of Amityville, 1945-1986," "The Expansion of the Amityville School System," "The Crimson Tide: Rich in Tradition," and "The Amityville Horror: Facts and Effects." It is richly illustrated with most articles containing end notes and a bibliography. (TRS)

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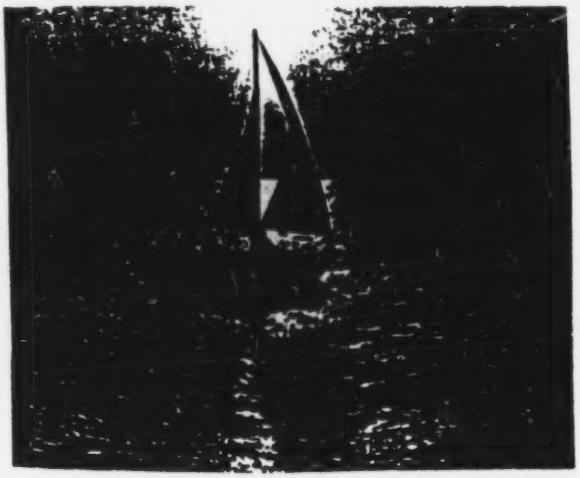
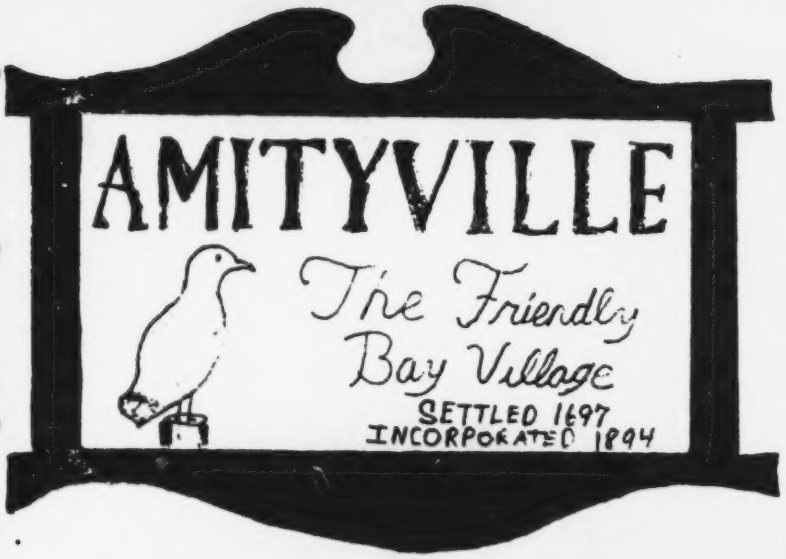
The Journal of Historical Inquiry Volume VI

Amityville: The Years After WW II





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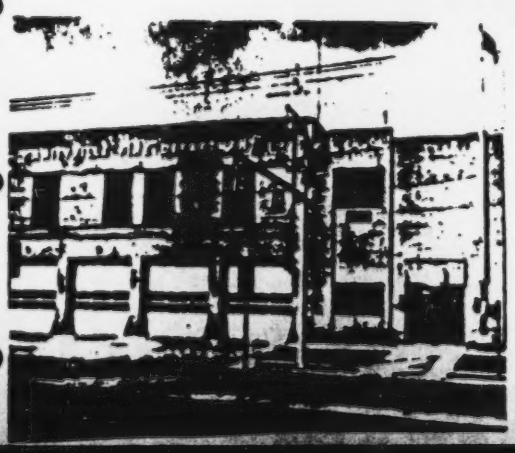
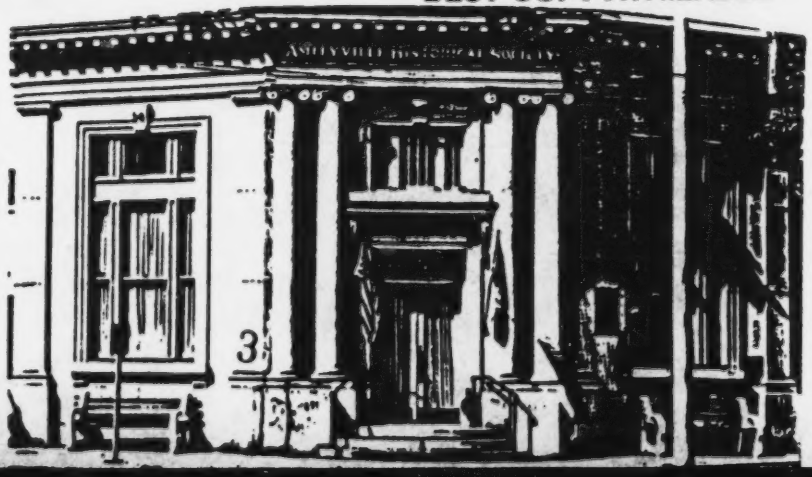




A NOTE FROM INSTRUCTOR AND EDITOR

Volume VI of The Journal of Historical Inquiry, the Amityville Memorial High School Advanced Placement History periodical, bears out what noted Columbia University historian Jacques Barzun once wrote: "The substances of what we think, though born in thought must live in ink." Given free rein, students chose various articles, of their own volition, which discussed the social, political, cultural, and educational scene of their community. Basically, the primary research that was conducted, consisting of interviews, local newspapers, and documents, tells us a great deal more about the community of Amityville during the years following World War II. Whatever information has been found and whatever opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and not the editorial instructor. The journal seeks objectivity and exactness wherever possible.

Readers of this journal will appreciate the scholarly efforts of the students. Not only is this issue richly illustrated, but it is well-written and carefully documented. The articles cover a wide range of topics based upon historical backdrop and contemporary observation. The articles in this journal deal with Civil Rights, De Facto Segregation, the Sally Thompson Case, the Public School System, the Department of Public Works, Village Government, the Village's expansion and changing architecture after World War II, the "Amityville Horror", the Baylife industry, the Amityville Record and the glory years of the Amityville football team. There is much of interest to read and enjoy.

This issue completes the trilogy of our local history series. I know, personally, that I've enjoyed working with and encouraging students to know more about their community's past. Whatever credits are due belong entirely to the students. They made it possible through hard work and diligent scholarly interest. For that reason, and for Mrs. Celeste DeBono's willingness to type this journal over the years, I dedicate this issue to them.

Charles F. Howlett, Ph.D.
A.P. History Instructor/Editor

TABLE OF CONTESTS

I.	De Facto Segregation in the Amityville School System by Jennifer Gergen	1 - 5
II.	The Civil Rights Movement in Amityville by Gregory Postal and Mark Panek	6 - 12
III.	The Sally Thompson Case by Christopher Bamman	13 - 18
IV.	Physical Changes in Amityville: Post WWII - Present by Robert Eastwood and Mike Capozzi	19 - 26
V.	Amityville Department of Public Works by Linda Waegerle	27 - 29
VI.	Amityville Baylife by Andrew Nicholson and Butch Chichester	30 - 34
VII.	The Amityville Record: Past and Present by Anthony Sarubbe and Alan Rios	35 - 40
VIII.	The Village Government of Amityville, 1945 - 1986 by Christopher J. Ubert and Roger A. DeMoore	41 - 46
IX.	The Expansion of the Amityville School System by Robert Goodman and Bradley Herman	47 - 51
X.	The Crimson Tide: Rich in Tradition by James Stemmle	52 - 56
XI.	The "Amityville Horror": Facts and Effects by Patty Muir and Jennifer Nicholson	57 - 61

I

DE FACTO SEGREGATION IN THE AMITYVILLE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Jennifer Gergen

Throughout the 1950's the enrollment of the Amityville Public School system steadily increased. By September of 1953 the enrollment had reached 2,700, and Herbert I. Landry, an educational consultant, warned the school system of a "changing picture of the future in the way of increased enrollments which can be expected on the basis of new homes which have mushroomed in the district in recent years." (1) In 1954, the Amityville Board of Education decided to address this problem by building new schools.

In early April of 1954 a plan for the acquisition of two 13-acre sites in the northern corners of the district was first brought before the Board of Education. The sites would be used for the construction of two grade schools with room for kindergarten through the sixth grades. One site was located on the west side of Albany Avenue in the extreme northeastern area of Amityville. The other site was located approximately one mile away on the west side of County Line Road in the extreme northwestern area of Amityville (and partially in the eastern area of Massapequa). The cost for the two sites would be about $160,000 ($5,500 per acre of land on the northeastern site; $5,650 per acre of land on the northwestern site).

The Board of Education on April 26, 1954, adopted a resolution which designated these areas as school sites. Plans were also made for a referendum, to be held on June 5, 1954, for the approval of the acquisition of these sites.

On June 5, over 1,200 people voted. The results were: 784 in favor, and 417 opposed. Initially, there was some confusion as to whether the resolution had been approved or defeated because it was originally announced that a 2/3 majority would be needed for approval. If that was the case, then the referendum had been defeated by 16 votes. The situation was cleared up when Pierson H. Hildreth, the attorney of the Board of Education, contacted the State Department of Education in Albany, New York, which said that a 2/3 majority was not needed in this case. Therefore, the acquisition of the two sites for $160,000 ($78,600 for the northeast site, and $81,400 for the northwest site) had been approved.

On December 30, 1954, the Board of Education adopted a resolution authorizing the issuance of serial bonds not exceeding $160,000 to pay for the two school sites. The Albany Avenue site was conveyed to the district on February 11, 1955, and the County Line Road site on February 17, 1955.

By this time, the Board had decided that the two new schools would be neighborhood schools. The Northeast school would be used for the kindergarten through the third grade for those children living north of Sunrise Highway and west of Broadway. The Northwest school would be used for the kindergarten through the third grade for those children living north of Sunrise Highway and east of Broadway. The Northwest school would also house grades four through six, along with the Park Avenue school already in existence.

This plan brought opposition from many residents of North Amityville as well as from the Central Long Island branch of the National Association

of Colored People (NAACP). Because the area surrounding the Northeast School was mainly black, they feared segregation if it was used as a neighborhood school.

As early as April 22, 1954, an article appeared in the village newspaper, the Amityville Record, expressing opposition to the Board's plan. This was the first time that the issue of segregation had been raised. The NAACP felt that the plan was a "definite attempt to segregate the Negro children of the area during the primary education." (2) They felt it would also be a waste of money since most of that area's children at that time attended school in Copiague and Farmingdale, not in Amityville. Here, the NAACP saw the possibility of "gerrymandering which might indicate political collusion between the Copiague and Amityville districts to swing Copiague school children into the Amityville district and into the Albany Avenue school." (3)

The president of the Board of Education, William Koepchen, said that the decision to make Northeast a neighborhood school had nothing to do with segregation. They merely wanted to provide schools where the children were.

The NAACP formed a committee to deal specifically with this problem. The members of this committee were: Mr. Robert Bean, chairman; Mr. Vincent Best; Mrs. Lucile Leonard; Mrs. Lorraine Leftenant; and Mr. Irving Adams. On May 20, 1954, Mr. Bean and Mrs. Leftenant made clear their own personal opinions that "any aspects of segregation which might result from a school on an Albany Avenue site would not be deliberate on the part of the Board, but would obtain from the location." (4) However, be it deliberate or not, they felt that something should be done to change the situation. Originally, the NAACP sought to influence plans for a central building to be attended by all of the children instead of the two that the Board had planned. As it became obvious that this would not happen, the NAACP tried to change the Board's plan so that the Northeast building would house all the kindergarten through third grade and the Northwest building would house the fourth through the sixth grades.

At a February, 1955 Board of Education meeting, the fears of the residents were brought before the Board by Mr. Robert Bean, Mrs. Lorraine Leftenant, and Mrs. Ethel Jackson. They received the same answer from Mr. Koepchen and other members of the Board - the schools must be built where the children were and there was no conscious attempt at segregation. In addition, the Board said that the State Department of Education was calling for the construction of neighborhood schools in place of larger school buildings.

In the spring of 1955, the NAACP tried a different approach to the problem. In June, Mr. Wilfred V. Reape, the President of the Central Long Island branch of the NAACP, announced that petitions were being circulated seeking a public hearing on the issue within 60 days of submission. They were asking for the integration of all the children in the two schools. "Failing that," said Mr. Reape, "we are prepared to go further, to take the matter to court." (5)

On July 14, 1955, the voters of the district aproved a proposition authorizing the construction of the two grade schools at an estimated cost of $1,992,000 ($1,130,000 for the Northwest school, and $862,000 for the Northeast school). The resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds to finance this was passed by the Board on August 10, 1955.

7

The Board of Education, on September 1st, rejected the NAACP's proposal for a public hearing. As promised, the NAACP decided to go to higher authorities on the matter. They requested a hearing with the State Commissioner of Education to solve the problem. It was scheduled for January 16, 1956.

In the meantime, the NAACP didn't give up trying to influence the Board of Education. Mr. Reape attended a Board meeting in October of 1955 where he again stated the position of the NAACP. He also declared that the building, when opened, would have a 76-24 ratio of negro to white children, and within the following six years the attendance would be entirely negro. He then suggested placing all of the kindergarten through third grades containing children of the northern part of the district together in the Northeast school, and all of the fourth through sixth grades in the Northwest school. The new President of the Board of Education, Mrs. Isabelle Fajans, replied that this plan would prevent little children from attending the nearest school. This would also require additional busing. The Board also claimed that color could not be considered while making attendance lines.

The hearing took place on January 16, 1956, in Albany, New York, in front of the State Commissioner of Education, James E. Allen. The NAACP's argument was presented by Mrs. Constance Motley of the legal staff of the NAACP and Wilfred Reape (who had been replaced as President of the Central Long Island branch of the NAACP by Dr. Eugene T. Reed on December 15, 1955). The Board's argument was presented by it's attorney, Pierson Hildreth. Also present were Mrs. Fajans, supervising principal Henry A. Kittle, and District Superintendent John P. McGuire.

Hildreth argued that the "trustees were acting under the rules of the State Department which, in effect, fails to recognize such considerations as race, color, or creed." (6) Under state policy, he asserted, the children should not be differentiated, but considered all Americans. The purpose of the Board, as they had argued all along, was to provide schools where children were. The decision was reserved.

While waiting for the decision, the Board decided to go on with their plans. They announced in the beginning of March that there had been an increase in the cost of construction of the schools. Because of the upsurge of costs of materials and labor which started in July of 1955, the bond issue fell short by 12 to 15 percent. Thus, they asked for an increase of $296,000 to b voted on on March 31. The totals for the Northwest school would be raised $156,000 to $1,286,000. The total for the Northeast school would be raised $140,000 to $1,002,000. The overall appropriation would be raised from $1,992,000 to $2,288,000. The proposition was approved by a vote of 565 to 122, and the bonds were authorized by the Board of Education in April, 1956.

After almost six months State Commissioner James E. Allen handed down his decision on July 6, 1956 - a decision in favor of the school Board. He ruled that the Amityville Board of Education "showed no discrimination in constructing an elementary school in a predominantly Negro neighborhood." (7) Because these same children who were supposedly being discriminated against were to be sent to the Northwest school, the junior high school, and the senior high school with all of the other children of the school district, this was not a case of discrimination. He echoed the opinion of the school Board that "elementary schools should be constructed in locations to provide the simplest access to young children as far as practi-

cable." (8) He also claimed that it wasn't safe for small children to cross Broadway, "one of the most dangerous highways of this section," (9) - something that they would have to do in order to attend the Northwest school. The "safety of the children, both white and Negro, is certainly a greater consideration than the claim made by the appellants that because there is a substantial predominance of Negros in the Northeast school, that this will mitigate against their educational program." (10) Commissioner Allen also said that the mere fact that a school is predominantly black does not require a school district to gerrymander the attendance lines to accomplish the desired effect. This in fact would "constitute as much discrimination as a gerrymandered line to accomplish the opposite effect." (11)

During the years following the decision, the NAACP persisted in its efforts to convince the Board of Education of the imbalance of the system. In 1965 the group again filed suit against the Board. This time, they were armed with attendance statistics from the new schools.

The appeal was made on behalf of Pamela K. Bedford, an infant, through her parents. The attorney for the appellants was Joan Franklin. The attorney for the respondent was LeRoy Van Nostrand, Jr. The case was heard by Commissioner Allen again, and the decision was announced on December 21, 1965.

The statistics presented to the Commissioner were as follows: (12)

SCHOOLS	WHITE	NEGRO	TOTAL	% NEGRO
Northeast K-3	15	454	469	96.8
Northwest K-5	568	25	593	4.0
Park K-5	736	423	1,159	36.4

After seeing these lop-sided statistics, Commissioner Allen found that a racial imbalance did exist in the Northeast and Northwest school buildings, and the "Board of Education must take steps to counteract the educational problems caused by such imbalance." (13) In response to the respondent's question of need for additional transportation, he pointed out that the distances involved were not great and this was a small matter that should not influence the racial balance of the schools.

The Commissioner also indicated that he had "taken full cognizance of the fact that many programs have been instituted by the local Board of Education for the elimination of disadvantage among pupils in this district." (14) Yet the "mere additional instruction and assistance aimed at help for the disadvantaged will not alone solve the educational problems caused by racial imbalance." (15)

The district was given until March 15, 1966 to prepare and deliver to Commissioner Allen a plan for the elimination of racial imbalance of the district. This plan would be effective in the coming school year of 1966-67.

In defense of his district about-face of policy, the Commissioner referred to the case of Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas of 1954, upon which this case is based. In the Brown case, the Supreme

Court reversed an earlier decision which decided that "separate but equal" was acceptable.

The sentiments expressed by Dr. Eugene T. Reed, former President of the Central Long Island branch of the NAACP, speaking for all of the people involved in this important undertaking: (There was) "no doubt in our minds that the intent was segregation," (16) This could not be permitted and it was their responsibiliby to see that it was changed. It took them over 10 years to do this, but their determination and effort has affected the Amityville school system from that time on.

ENDNOTES

1. The Amityville Record, September 10, 1953
2. The Amityville Record, April 22, 1954
3. Ibid
4. The Board of Education Minutes, May 20, 1954
5. The Amityville Record, June 16, 1955
6. The Amityville Record, January 19, 1956
7. The Amityville Record, July 19, 1956
8. The State Department of Education transcript of Bell vs. the Board of Education, p.2
9. Ibid
10. Ibid p.3
11. Ibid
12. The State Department of Education transcript of Bedford vs. the Board of Education, p.1
13. Ibid p.2
14. Ibid p.6
15. Ibid
16. Interview with Dr. Reed, February 19, 1986

II

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN AMITYVILLE

Greg Postal and Mark Panek

Throughout American history, there have been various issues which have had a great effect on the way we live today. When speaking of the major issues of our country, and more importantly, our town, one that quickly comes to mind is that of Civil Rights. While it is true that nearly everyone in Amityville is aware of the Civil Rights struggles during the 1950's and 1960's in other parts of America, it is also true that many villagers are unaware of the struggle for equality of black people right here in Amityville.

During and before the 1950's in Amityville, the situation for Blacks was not a good one. There were no black teachers, blacks owned no businesses in the village, there were very few steady jobs for blacks, and a better, more equal way of living was nowhere in sight. Due in part to segregation of schools, and due mostly to segregation of housing, most whites were either unaware that there was any problem at all, or they just didn't care. Blacks and whites did interact with each other, but, due to the fact that neighborhoods were segregated, this interaction was too minimal to dissolve the prejudices of narrow minds. A problem existed, but most whites assumed that it did not.

Another reason why whites were unaware that there was a problem was because, before the 1950's, there was little if any unrest within the black community. Most blacks believed that there was nothing that they could do to improve their lives, so they made the best of what they had. They "knew their place," and seemed content. This "contentment" led to further apathy on the part of the white community in Amityville.

> "There was always an interaction here - even when I was a child. Before the 1950's, many of the blacks 'knew their place,' and more or less stayed within those parameters, so there was no difficulty. A lot of people assumed that there was no discrimination, or said that there was no discrimination even though there was." (1)

One area where this discrimination was quite evident was in the area of employment. Before the 1950's, the businesses of Amityville were vital to the lives of the townspeople. There were no malls or shopping centers, so the village businesses played a much more important role than they do today. Of all these important establishments, however, none were owned by blacks. Not only that, but few blacks were even hired to work steady jobs in Amityville. Also, when people came to Amityville to start new businesses, they would bring their own workers rather than hire blacks in Amityville.

Although there were many black students in Amityville, there were no black teachers. "The School Board... had these old dyed-in-the-wool stereotypes," (2) so none were hired. Students in the Amityville school district were sent to the school nearest to their home. The fact that neighborhoods were segregated was obvious, and the fact that this was obvious made the school system in Amityville a form of deliberate segregation. Many white parents simply did not want their children going to

school with black children.

Had it not been for the segregated housing patterns in Amityville, there would have been much more social interaction between the two races. This would have dissolved prejudices on both sides, and there would have been much less discrimination. But, because of segregation of neighborhoods, many whites in Amityville were blind to the fact that they were no better than blacks. They were ignorant, and assumed the worst. By the 1950's, though, blacks here in Amityville became unhappy enough with their place in society to do something to make changes.

During the 1950's and 60's, when the majority of Civil Rights activism took place, the Civil Rights movement had it's greatest impact on Amityville as a community. Because of the large percentage of the black population in Amityville, it's struggles were important not only locally, but to a certain extent, nationally.

> "I consider Amityville to be one of the most racially divided communities that I've ever encountered." (3)

One of the most active forces in the Civil Rights movement was that of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

> "The black community of Amityville was probably more active than other areas of Long Island. For example, this (Amityville) branch (of the NAACP) of the more than 20 on Long Island, in the last 20 years, has always been the largest." (4)

The Amityville Chapter of the NAACP received it's charter on November 17th, 1946. Later, in 1953, the branch evolved into the Central Long Island branch. The NAACP was active in several ways. First and probably most importantly, it provided blacks in Amityville with the realization that things need not stay the way they had always been. Blacks spoke up more than they ever had before. They soon found, however, that their struggle would require more than just their voices and opinions. They would have to fight, and fight hard for their rights, and they did. Very often, it was actually harder in the Northern communities to fight the injustices blacks faced. In the South, while conflicts were head-on, and even violent, the issues were clearly seen and thus more easily combatable. Also in the South, an important factor was the fact that there were no segregated housing patterns. In the South during slavery days, blacks and whites lived together out of necessity. When the slaves were freed, black and white were already living together, so this part of the integration problem was already solved. In the North, the segregated housing developed slowly over a long period of time and by the time people realized it was segregated there was not much that could be done.

> "Once you go south of Merrick Road... it's like a Mason-Dixon line." (5)

Much of the discrimination in the North started in this way. Because it was more subtle and intangable in the North, segregation was harder to fight. It is much harder to fight something that can't be seen, and this is what Northern activists faced. In Amityville, as active as many blacks were within the movement, there was very little white participation.

> "You had very little involvement of the white community in Amityville - as opposed to other communities on Long Island." (6)

Part of this was lack of concern, but also many white people were worried about the repercussions that could have been involved, such as loss of a job. While such fears were largely unfounded, sometimes problems did exist.

> "I had a friend in Amityville... who was very concerned about the racial experience in the schools... that there was no real contact between white and black kids in the Junior High School and in the High School - except in areas of conflict - and she tried very hard to do all kinds of things... and she received all kinds of threats." (7)

The biggest, and probably the most successful issue faced was desegregation of public schools. On this issue, many whites were firmly opposed to desegregation.

> "There was certainly a very substantial segment of the white community openly opposed to ending the deliberate segregation in the Public Schools." (8)

However, the white opposition was more than just mere prejudice. The whites who were of this opinion also controlled the Amityville School Board.

> "She was one of the most vicious opponents of ending segregation any place in the country, comparable to Mrs. Hicks of Boston..." (9)

As a result of this control of the School Board by this factor, change was difficult, and most of it had to result from court cases. In this respect, the NAACP played the most important role.

During 1956, a heated debate rose about the location of a new elementary school. The NAACP filed a suit on July 6th, 1956, with the State Commission of Education regarding the school's location, and the commission sided with the NAACP. The resulting location was within the black community.

Another more well-known instance resulted in the desegregation of the Amityville Public Schools. On March 21, 1962, the NAACP filed a suit in federal court charging that the Amityville Public Schools were deliberately segregated. Since there was a New York State law prohibiting deliberate segregation, the suit tried to prove the existance of segregation in the Amityville Schools. Because of the possible widespread ramifications, the then chief of the NAACP's legal staff sent June Shagaloff to read the minutes from the Amityville Board of Education meetings dating back to the 1920's. As a result of the conclusive proof of deliberate segregation found, the Board of Education agreed to an out of court agreement with the NAACP. Miss Shagaloff suggested using the Princeton Plan in Amityville, to solve the problem in the district. This provided for a rotation to a different community school for all students after spending a certain number of grade levels in their previous schools.

Another important area which the Civil Rights movement greatly affected was that of jobs and economic opportunities. In this area, one of the most influencial groups was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). CORE's ideology and methods were somewhat different from those of the NAACP, although both were seeking the same results. CORE's approach was a

more radical one, stressing Black Nationalism, and utilizing protests, boycotts, and sit-ins. The main focus of CORE was to influence businesses, housing establishments, restaurants, and shopping centers, that would not hire blacks or allow blacks to patronize their businesses. When CORE attempted to correct these blatant abuses of human rights, they ran up against a stone wall of prejudice.

> "We were trying to bash our way in for equality, and these (other) forces were trying to keep the status quo." (10)

While CORE was picketing at a real estate office in Hicksville, an opposing faction counter-picketed the group. A conflict ensued which could have led to violence, if not for the intervention of several Tactical Police forces.

> "(When we were picketing in Hicksville), there was a group counter-picketing us called SPONGE. That stood for 'Society to Prevent Niggers from Getting Everything'. They threw eggs at us..." (11)

Also, when CORE would picket a business which did not hire blacks, this business would often claim that no blacks had applied. Even after the businesses had supposedly agreed to hire blacks, realistically, blacks still couldn't get jobs at these businesses.

> "What we discovered was that each step we take, there is a little more pudding put on top of the pie... you're always reaching." (12)

To eliminate this excuse, CORE started a job bank. They would take applications from blacks who needed jobs, and catagorize them according to experience and ability.

> "When we went to a bank and picketed and they said that they had no black applicants, we had somebody (for the job). They could no longer tell us they couldn't find everybody." (13)

One example of discrimination in housing that CORE dealt with, was when a black couple was denied an apartment in an apartment complex on Merrick Road. First CORE made an appeal to the owner. When he did not relent, CORE members "sat-in" at the apartment complex all night. As a result, the couple was allowed to rent the apartment.

While CORE and the NAACP had differing philosophical bases, they often worked together on the same issues. For example, there were many CORE members who also belonged to the NAACP. Also, if CORE members got arrested for demonstrating, or if they needed a lawyer, the NAACP's legal staff would help them out.

Mr. Irwin Quintyne, one of the founders of the Suffolk County chapter of CORE, expressed his opinion on where many of the problems between the black and white communities stemmed from.

> "There is a certain little clique in the village that keeps the two forces fighting, keeps chaos... so we never really get to do what's right." (14)

He believes that many people are confusing their true goals of most of the

Civil Rights issues. He feels that the debates over the various Civil Rights issues are affecting education adversely. He says that the white community harbors too much suspicion of the black community's motives.

> "There's always that fear that 'if you give them (blacks) too much, they'll take over' - take over what? We're thinking of the education of the children!" (15)

June Shagaloff-Alexander believes that the problem lies in the general attitude of many members of the white community.

> "Change is very unwelcome by the white community. Basically, any kind of change (is unwelcome), and it's in this respect that I consider Amityville to be one of the most conservative, reactionary white communities I've encountered outside the South." (16)

Mr. Quintyne feels that the major problem in moving forward has been the politics involved, and where the power lies.

> "The problem that I see with the School District is that whites have a perception of blacks, and blacks have a perception of whites, but it's not a perception that was arrived at by these two sides alone. I think that dirt was thrown into the game." (17)

He feels that there is a "Power Pyramid" that exists, and that unless we change it, blacks and whites will always be at odds with each other.

Elite

Middle Class

Lower class blacks and whites

> "They (the elite) play games with us so that we are battling ... each other, and we never get to get (to the level of the elite) to straighten out whatever the problems are. What we always say is (that we should) invert (the pyramid), and put the people, blacks and whites (on top). Then all the power will flow (to the people). (18)

Lower class blacks and whites

Middle Class

Elite

Despite the many, still unsolved problems involving Civil Rights, there has already been a great deal of progress, and hopefully more so in the future. In the black community, people's general attitudes have changed.

> "The biggest change has been the changes with the black community... the growing determination of the black community to participate more and to demand more participation in power sharing, through the vote, through demonstrations, (and) through education." (19)

To a degree, the major aspect of the Civil Rights movement, that of changing ideas and prejudices, was somewhat successful.

> "Perceptions are hard to change, and I guess that's what the whole Civil Rights movement was about, was to change people's perceptions, to change attitudes, to change period." (20)

Overall, the movement was successfull in some ways, and unsuccessful in others. One success is that it taught the black community the importance of working as a whole.

> "I would like to think that CORE taught the people of North Amityville that 'we' is better than 'I.'" (21)

The Civil Rights activists, while not as prominant as they have been in the past, are still working to improve conditions, and still hoping for an eventual, total success.

> "You always see light at the end of the tunnel, and you keep moving toward that light. You keep hoping that things are going to get better." (22)

ENDNOTES

1. Interview with Mr. Thomas Green, February, 1986
2. Interview with Mr. Irving Quintyne, February, 1986
3. Interview with Ms. June Shagaloff-Alexander, February, 1986
4. Interview with Dr. Eugene Reed, February, 1986
5. Interview with Ms. June Shagaloff-Alexander, February, 1986
6. Interview with Dr. Eugene Reed, February, 1986
7. Interview with Ms. June Shagaloff-Alexander, February 1986
8. IBID.
9. IBID.
10. Interview with Mr. Irwin Quintyne, February, 1986
11. IBID.
12. IBID.
13. IBID.
14. IBID.
15. IBID.
16. Interview with June Shagaloff-Alexander, February, 1986

17. Interview with Mr. Irwin Quintyne, February, 1986

18. IBID.

19. Interview with Ms. June Shagaloff-Alexander, February, 1986

20. Interview with Mr. Irwin Quintyne, February, 1986

21. IBID.

22. IBID.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Personal Biographies of the People Interviewed

June Shagaloff-Alexander - After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, Mrs. Alexander went to work in the 1950's for the legal department of the NAACP under Thurgood Marshall. She eventually became the National Education Director of the NAACP during the 1960's. She came to Amityville when the NAACP brought suit against the Amityville School district for maintaining segregated schools. She was the one who suggested the use of the Princeton Plan as the way to overcome racial patterns of residence in Amityville schools.

Thomas Greene - Mr. Greene grew up in Amityville and graduated from Amityville public schools. He served as a medic in World War II, and is now retired after a career in the postal service. He has served on the Amityville Board of Education for twelve years and is the current board president. He is extremely active in the statewide American Legion, and is also in the local Hunter-Squires-Jackson Post.

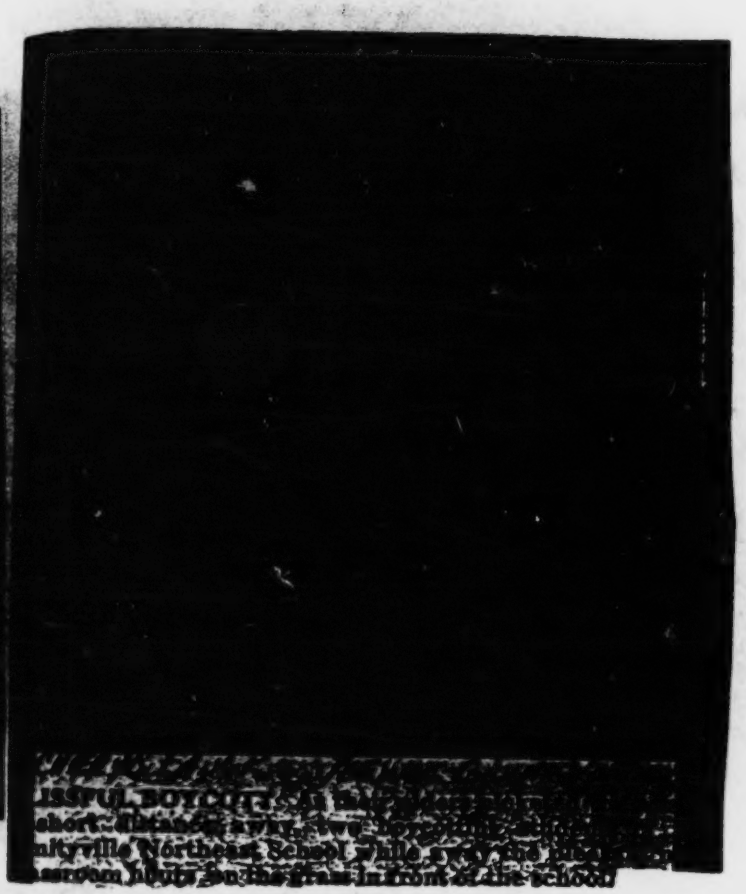
Dr. Eugene Reed - Dr. Reed is a dentist in North Amityville. He has served as the president of the Central Long Island Branch of the NAACP and also as president of the New York State NAACP Conference.

Irwin Quintyne - Mr. Quintyne is a longtime Amityville resident, who moved to Amityville after he served in World War II. Mr. Quintyne was one of the five founders and chairpeople of the Suffolk County chapter of CORE. He also served on the Amityville school district's citizen's advisory committee.

We would like to apologize for any inaccuracies in any details contained in this document in relation to the court cases involving the Amityville School District. All information pertinent to these cases was obtained through the various interviews we conducted.

Dr. Eugene Reed-1965

Lincoln Lynch, Right, Meets Opposition



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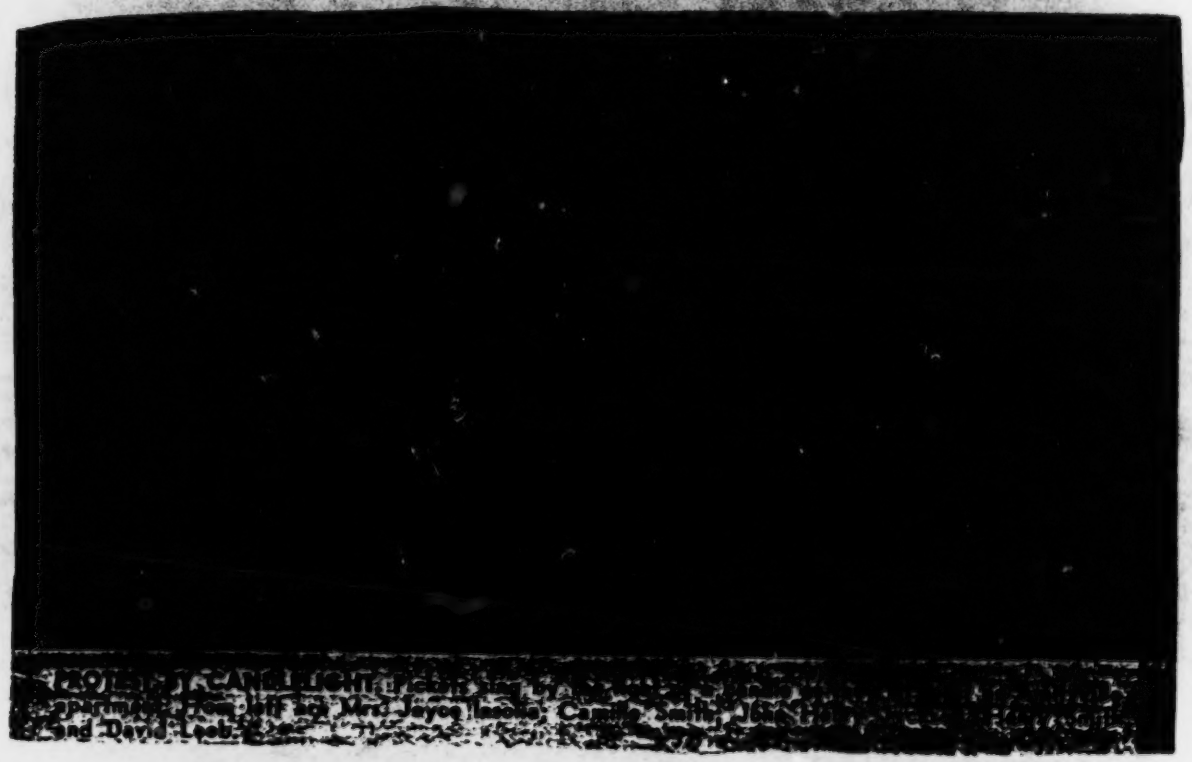

Photographs courtesy of Irwin Quintyne and Dr. Eugene Reed

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III

THE SALLY THOMPSON CASE

Christopher Bamman

On Monday, August 15, 1983, a decision was made by the Amityville Board of Education that divided it along racial lines. It was the firing of Northeast School Principal, Sally Thompson.

The vote was 5-2 with black members Harold Brown and Thomas Greene dissenting. This vote followed the recommendation of Dr. Donald Behnke, the Superintendent of Schools. This decision not to renew Mrs. Thompson's contract caused an outcry from community leaders and parents who supported Mrs. Thompson. Many of these people attended the meeting.

The NAACP was represented by Myrna Taylor, local chapter president, who attended as a private citizen. She said of Thompson "we consider her an excellent administrator, sensitive to the needs of all children, not just black children. The test scores have been raised in both math and reading. She has a good relationship with the community and the children. When you get someone good you want to keep them." (1)

The board took approximately one hour to review the case and answer questions. When they returned, the vote was taken and they decided not to renew Mrs. Thompson's contract.

The members of the audience began shouting that the community had no voice and no opportunity to take action to prevent her removal.

Attorney LeRoy Van Nostrand stated the audience could attend the meeting but could not participate in its decisions.

Trustee Harold Brown spoke to the audience saying "I have tried for five weeks to find out what we are dismissing Sally Thompson for," adding he could find no sufficient reason for not renewing her contract. (2)

Dorthea Brewster, chairman of the ad hoc committee of the American Indian and Afro-American Council of North Amityville for Educational Goals and Aspirations, read a prepared statement. She said that the committee would be taking steps to achieve "the implementation and realization of the basic American rights." (3)

Another member of the audience to speak was Eugene Burnette and he said, "I suggest this is a racial issue. How can we accept the fact that our board members disagree on this issue." He added that "if we don't have input, then we are not a free society." (4)

Irwin Quintyne was another person who objected to the board's decision.

Myrna Taylor said that the NAACP was prepared to institute a lawsuit in Federal Court on behalf of Mrs. Thompson. She also said the NAACP would try to get an injunction preventing the district from hiring another permanent principal.

The main objection of the parents and community leaders regarding the

Thompson case was that the reasons for the firing were never made public.

Dr. Behnke stated he would hire an acting principal before school opens in September.

With that they adjourned the meeting.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. CHARLES KLARMANN - SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Q. How long before Mrs. Thompson's contract expired did the board decide to dismiss her?

A. She wasn't granted tenure, she did not stay three years. Dr. Behnke was not satisfied because grades went down and scores were low. She was given a year to fix the problem but nothing happened.

Q. Was there any complaints from the faculty at Northeast?

A. Some people were happy with Mrs. Thompson's performance and some were not.

Q. The August 18, 1983, Amityville Record does not say why she was dismissed, why did the board come to the decision to release Mrs. Thompson?

A. She was terminated when her three year probation was up and they were not happy with her performance and she was dismissed.

Q. Why didn't the public have a right in the decision making process? Did the fact that the majority of the audience were minorities have anything to do with not allowing them to vote? Was the board concerned thay might overrule their decision?

A. It was a board decision and it had nothing to do with the audience. The audience cannot be debating back and forth.

Q. How will the NAACP affect future decisions by the school board since the incident?

A. They won't affect it if the board hires enough minorities to fill jobs. They check to make sure the board is hiring its share of qualified minorities and not being racial. The NAACP said it was a racial decision.

Mrs. Thompson told the school board that she was filing a lawsuit. She hired an attorney from Albany, Steven C. Finley.

As a result of the board decision to fire Mrs. Thompson and not make public the reasons thus prompted the Amityville Record to contact Mr. Finley of Albany. He said some of the reasons for Mrs. Thompson's termination were that she had contacted board members regarding problems she was having in her administration and that she had broken the chain of command. Another criticism was that the Administration claimed Mrs. Thompson was not sufficiently familiar with an innovative reading program to administer it. However, reading skills were reported to have increased. He was planning to make her evaluation public. Mr. Finley said the main point of the lawsuit would be to reinstate Mrs. Thompson to her former position and maintain her salary of $36,995. He also was going to ask for back pay and

a compensation of $350.000 for personal damages.

Dr. Behnke expressed surprise that an attorney for a district employee would bring an evaluation to public view. "What Mr. Finley's statements now do is release the district from any charges along those lines since he has chosen to make evaluative materials public himself." (5)

Finley also stated that a breach of collective bargaining was a point of contention. He said that those agreements require that a non-tenured employee be given 90 days written notice prior to the date of termination. According to Mrs. Thompson, she was first notified of her termination after the August 15th board meeting and was asked to "clear out" in four days.

The Central Long Island Branch of the NAACP supported by regional, state and national offices supported the community response to the school board's decision to reject terminating Mrs. Thompson's appointment. They stated, "the concensus of the organization leaders is that it is not simply the act of firing an employee, it is the insensitivity to the community and its investment in black leadership that is remiss on the part of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Donald Behnke." (6)

Legal counsel for the Central Long Island NAACP, Peter Newman, planned to submit a petition to the United States District Court to allow representation of the NAACP appear "amicus curiae" (friend of the court) in support of Mrs. Thompson.

In the interim a temporary principal was named in August, 1983, to succeed Sally Thompson. He was Joseph Sapare and he was to remain until a permanent principal could be found.

When school opened that September, the Northeast Elementary School was hit with a parental boycott. Student attendance was well below average. The parents were protesting the firing of Northeast School Principal Sally Thompson. The protesters demanded "quality education" as they picketed outside the school. Marchers represented a coalition that included the newly formed Quality Education Committee, parents of Northeast School students,the NAACP and the Black United Front.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Donald Behnke reported that total enrollment neared 60 percent on the first day and 70 percent the rest of the week. He stated he hoped full attendance would occur the second week of school.

Before opening a very crowded school board meeting that September, 1983, Amityville School Board President, Judy Maisel read a prepared statement to the board and community. In it she stated,

> "Since July, this board has been dealing with questions from the Community, Press and the NAACP on the probationary appointment of Sally Thompson. We have made no public disclosure of circumstances concerning this matter on advice of counsel. The decision of the board is not going to be reversed by the board.
>
> The matter is now in the court and that is where it will be settled. The board and administration will not jeopardize the district's position by discussion of the issue.
>
> This board of Education has a lot of work ahead of it. One

of the first priorities is the selection of a permanent replacement principal. We have over 100 applications to consider. We have to have time to do this and starting at 11:00 P.M. for executive sessions is not the proper way.

This district has to get back to doing its job, giving the best education we can to every child enrolled." (7)

The board also voted to establish a "task force" to be made up of residents of the community and school district who wished to establish a better line of communication with the board.

As a result of the many problems arising from the Sally Thompson case, the Amityville School Board re-evaluated its Affirmative Action Program. It suggested bi-racial committees to work on the school programs to help improve math and reading.

The firing of Mrs. Thompson also prompted charges of racial discrimination and criticisms. The district was investigated by several state agencies. While most were found to be without merit, some such as low standardized test scores and other academic problems were found to be legitimate.

Mr. Klarmann did not run for re-election to the school board because he has a business in Amityville and deals with minorities. He said that if he ran for re-election blacks would not support his business because of his decision.

The same is also said for Jerold Nemetz who is a lawyer with minority clientele. Judy Maisel also chose not to run for re-election.

This issue eventually brought forth the resignation of Dr. Behnke. After the incident, his effectiveness as Superintendent diminished considerably due to community divisiveness, In June of 1985, he assumed the Superintendency of the Southampton school district on eastern Long Island.

Three board members involved in the issue remain: Tom Greene, Jeanette Santos and Marie Caridi. The current board president is Tom Greene.

THE DECISION

The Amityville school district officials approved a resolution on the Sally Thompson suit on Monday, December 2, 1985. The resolution calls for a sum of $25,999 to be paid to Sally Thompson, the former Northeast Principal, as a part of her discrimination suit against the district.

New Superintendent, Michael Walsh, approved the resolution as a "trade-off to a potential litigation in court." He also said the district admitted no guilt by settling. He said "I think the board listened very carefully to the argument from the insurance company and their attorney and decided it was better to settle than go through the expense of a long court trial." (8)

Mrs. Thompson said while an agreement has been reached it isn't over yet. She is happy with the decision because the school district has admitted the error of former superintendent Dr. Behnke, and that her firing was due to totally unfounded reasons and without cause.

Mrs. Thompson said that clearing her reputation was the reason for filing the $250,000 suit. "My track record proves I'm an excellent administrator," she said, "I make an excellent salary as the principal of an elementary school in Hempstead, Long Island." (9)

School district attorney, Marshall Sweetbaum said, "the district admits no guilt. Litigation is costly and time consuming. This case generated ill will in the community and this was a way to bring the community back together." (10)

The majority of the money, $20,000, will be paid by Utica Mutual, the district's former insurance carrier. The district is responsible for paying $5,000.

Dr. Behnke was informed of the development and resolution of the case and has given his support of the settlement.

ENDNOTES

1. Amityville Record, August 18, 1983, Volume 26, page 1
2. Ibid, page 1
3. Ibid, page 1
4. Ibid, page 2
5. Amityville Record, September 15, 1983, Volume 30, page 1
6. Ibid, page 2
7. Amityville Record, September 29, 1983, Volume 32, page 1
8. Amityville Record, December 11, 1985, Volume 43, page 1
9. Ibid, page 1
10. Ibid, page 1

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2. Amityville Record, September 1, 1983, Volume 28
3. Amityville Record, September 15, 1983, Volume 30
4. Amityville Record, September 29, 1983, Volume 32
5. Amityville Record, January 12, 1984, Volume 47
6. Amityville Record, January 26, 1984, Volume 49
7. Amityville Record, February 9, 1984, Volume 51
8. Amityville Record, July 19, 1984, Volume 22
9. Amityville Record, December 11, 1985, Volume 43

IV

PHYSICAL CHANGES IN AMITYVILLE: POST WWII - PRESENT

Robert Eastwood and Mike Capozzi

INTRODUCTION

Post World II Amityville met with radical change. It was no longer a farming community but rather an upward moving, commercially oriented incorporated village. With the boom of the construction industry, the farm met it's end to make room for homes. With this came an increase in taxes and improved transportation both for incoming goods and public get around.

INTERVIEW WITH WALTER SAXTON

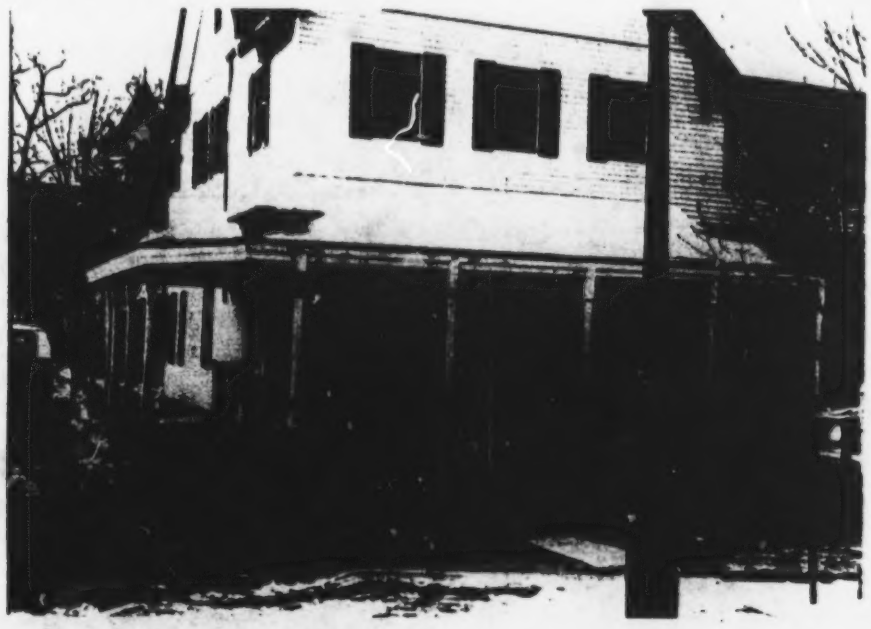
We visited Mr. Saxton at his home on South Ireland Place in order to conduct this interview. He has lived in Amityville his whole life and posesses a great deal of knowledge about this village.

Q. How do you recall Amityville in the second half of the 1940's and how do you compare it to today?

A. Right after World War II there was quite a bit of change in Amityville. The defense plants closed, houses were being built, facilities such as the local beach were being improved and the highways were being widened. So there was a lot of change going on, much more than today.

Q. Is there anything in Amityville that, since 1945, remains unchanged?

A. Well, most areas have undergone minor physical changes, so the only area that I can say has remained unchanged is the business section on the west side of Broadway.



The corner of Park Avenue and Ireland Place, Amityville: 1986

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Q. In which way has Amityville grown the most, commercially or residentially?

A. I think Amityville's commercial status is hardly any different today from 1945. So I would say that the growth has been mainly residential since World War II ended. This is best illustrated by the number of housing developments and apartments put up over the last 40 years.

Q. In which direction do you feel the development of Amityville is heading, positive or negative?

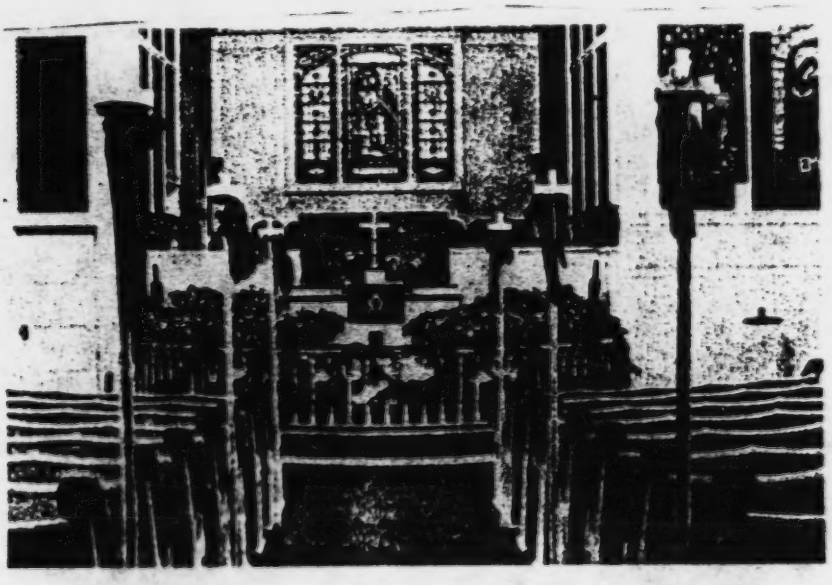
A. I think the outlook in Amityville is upbeat, there has been a lot of development on Route 110 and that is bound to bring commercial benefits to Amityville. So the outlook for the village looks positive.

CHANGES IN THE CHURCHES OF AMITYVILLE

Since 1945 the churches in the village of Amityville have all undergone significant changes. These changes have been made to fit the needs of the public. In 1792 the first church was formed in Amityville; that church still remains. The church that I am speaking of is the Methodist church on lower Broadway. There are three other churches in the village that will also be mentioned in this article, St. Paul's, St. Martin of Tours and St. Mary's.

THE METHODIST CHURCH

For over a century, the Methodist church that stands on lower Broadway has served as a place of worship for the members of the Amityville Community. The church's location was moved from place to place from 1792 to 1867, when it was moved to it's present location on Broadway. Here, it was rebuilt and enlarged. The first significant change after World War II was the renovation of the sanctuary in 1949.



Interior of the Methodist Church, Christmas, 1979

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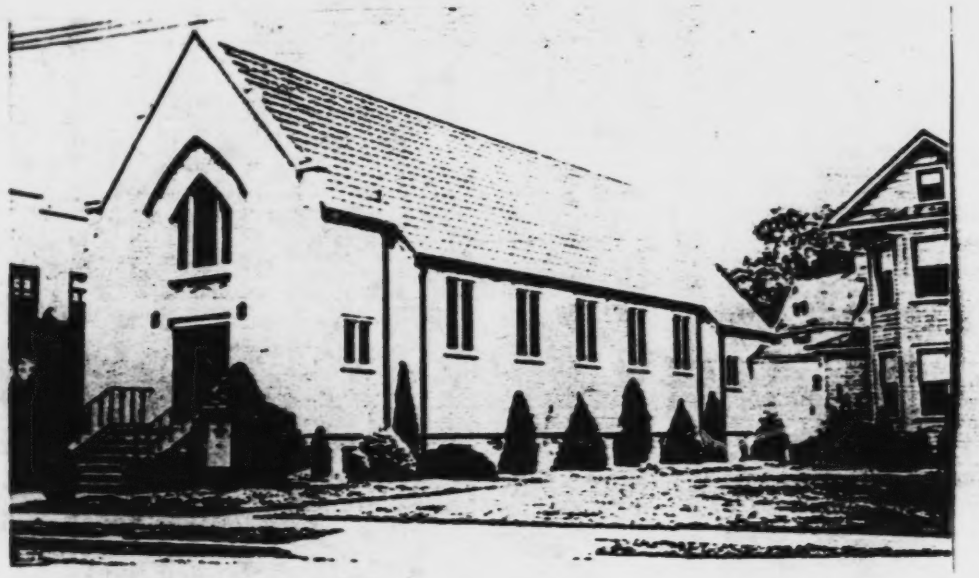
During this renovation, the organ was modified and an organ chamber was provided. The organ was again reconditioned in 1976 with the addition of ranks of pipes for the addition of trumpet and oboe. Besides Mass services, many other activities take place in this church, such as Scout functions and Sunday School. Through the years, the First United Methodist Church "has kept pace with the times and provided a fine place of worship for the many village residents and visitors who have contributed to the good life in our community." (1)

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

The Lutheran church of St. Paul's was opened in 1930 and by November 1931, the church had a permanent home on Park Avenue, where it still remains. The first major change was the addition of a church hall at the rear of the church. Also in 1949, the main entrance was moved from the front to the south side.

Moving the main entrance to the south side considerable enlarged the seating capacity. In 1979 a refinishing of the stained glass windows took place to further improve the look of the church. Despite these changes, St. Paul's has been an integral part of the Amityville community for over fifty years.



St. Paul's Church in 1947

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS CHURCH

The St. Martin's parish was founded in 1897. Over the years, quite a few changes have come to this parish. As the population of Long Island increased, the geographical area of St. Martin's parish decreased. New churches were established in areas previously served by the Amityville church. Some of these areas were; Seaford, Copiague and Massapequa. In 1963, the old St. Martins was demolished and a new, larger brick church replaced it. The dedication of this church was May 24, 1964. In 1972, the

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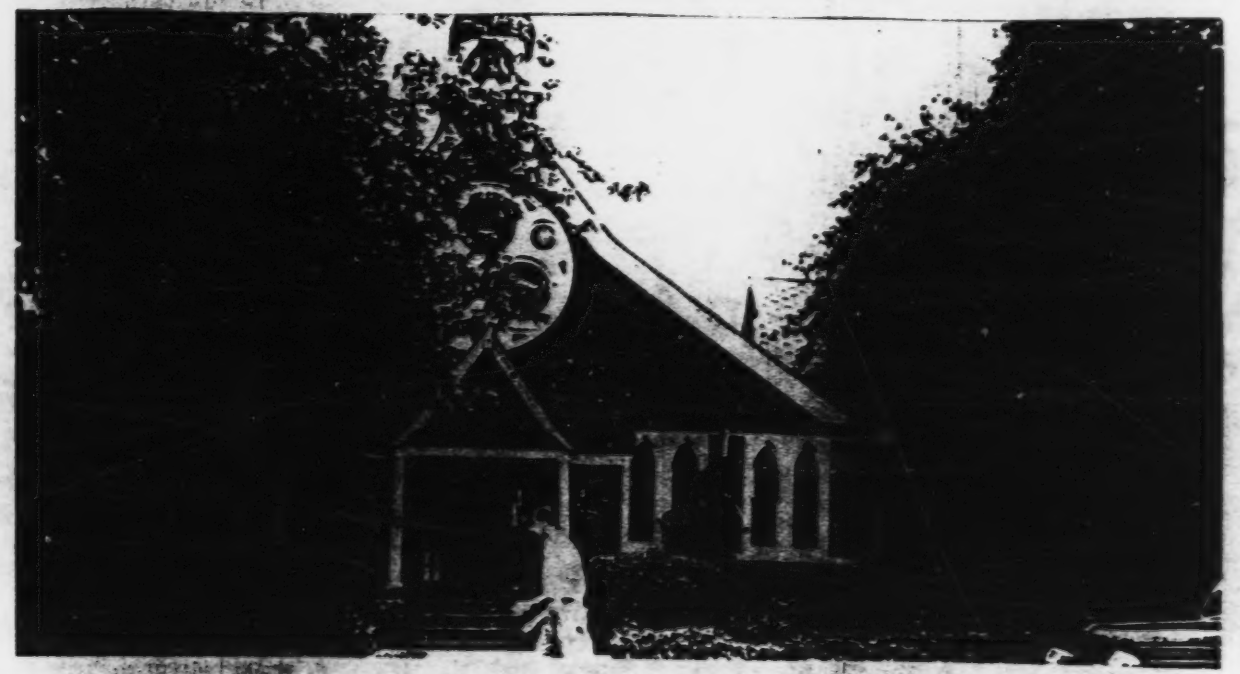
parishioners came together in order to join in the celebration of the church's 75th anniversary.

St. Martin's Church Today

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

The Episcopal church of St. Mary's was founded in 1886. Over the years many changes and improvements have taken place at St. Mary's. In 1952 and again in 1959 the state took property away from the church in order to increase the width of Broadway. This, in turn, moved the highway closer to the front entrance. In 1961, the parish members gathered to celebrate the church's 75th anniversary. Another celebration took place in 1976 when the citizens of Amityville gathered 'round the different parts of the village to hear the bells of St. Mary's in celebration of the Bicentennial. The last major change in this church took place eight years ago in 1978, when the church's electronic organ was replaced with a more traditional pipe organ.



St. Mary's Church in 1949

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AMITYVILLE'S LIBRARY

The beginnings of the library in Amityville actually took place in 1902. At this time, only a small group of people was involved with the library and it was called the "Amityville Literary Society". (2) Eventually the library got it's own building and more members. Following World War II, the population of Amityville grew and in turn more demands were placed upon the library. "Under the urging of Miss Caroline Fitz, and the free library board, consideration was given to erect a larger building which could finally serve as a permanent home for the Amityville Free Library." (3) The decision that was finally made was to change the free library over to a public library and have it function as part of the Amityville school district. The site of the library was also changed in 1972, as a new building with more modern provisions was erected on the corner of Oak Street and John Street. The new building remains in 1986 as one of the most beautiful structures in the community.

Amityville's Old Library before 1972

THE AMITYVILLE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS

With the growth of Amityville both commercially and residentially, it was no longer feasible to have both the firehouse and police station in the same building. In 1977 a new headquarters for the fire department was erected on the corner of West Oak Street and Ketcham Avenue. This was the old site of Henry Leigh Livery Stables. The building on Greene Avenue that housed both the fire and police departments was remodeled in 1978 for the uses of police headquarters and the village court. In 1973 the Amityville fire department organized it's rescue squad, which many of the calls are answered by. This unit is used to render first aid to all accident victims. Today, just like it was in 1893 when Hose Company #1 was formed, the Amityville fire department is all volunteer.

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Amityville's Old Firehouse Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1

THE TRIANGLE BUILDING

When one thinks of the Village of Amityville, one building that cannot escape mention is the triangle building. Constructed in 1892, she has seen quite a number of changes. In the mid-1940's, the building's tenants were: Mrs. Quimby's Gift Shoppe, the Christian Science Reading Room and the news room of Amityville's weekly newspaper at that time, the Long Island Sun. In 1968 she was a witness to President Nixon, his wife and Governor Nelson Rockefeller, as they passed by this building during the election campaign. During the 1970's and early 1980's, it started to show signs of age. In the early 1980's, while Amityville was undergoing a "facelift," the triangle building was repainted and furnished, along with the clock and the outside property. Old fashioned gas style lights were put in and the sidewalk had red bricks put in. The only original thing missing is the old clock tower. Today, in 1986, this historical building houses: Self Image Haircutters, Harrington Travel, Triangle Jewelers and the office of Attorney Peter Newman.

The Triangle Building in 1986

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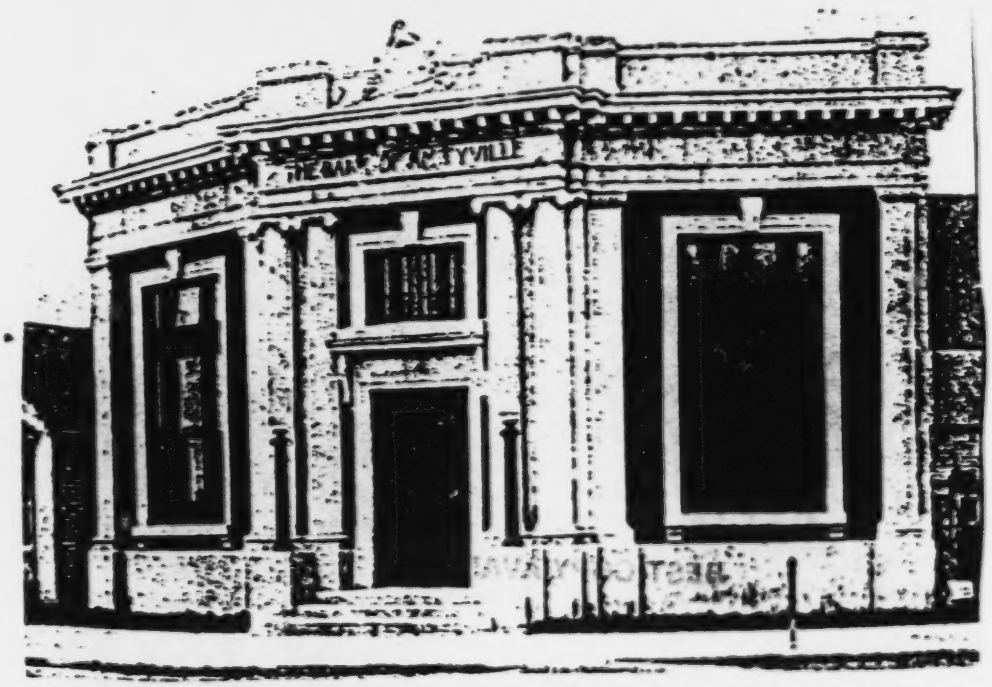
THE AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On June 4, 1969, the Amityville Historical Society was founded. This was done in order to have an institution that could preserve the heritage of the village of Amityville. In addition to this, four years later the Society established a museum. It is called the Lauder Museum and is in the building in town that, at one time was the bank of Amityville. Here, the village's past history may be researched and preserved.

Amityville Historical Society, Lauder Museum



The Same Building, The Bank of Amityville, erected 1909

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The Corner of Park Avenue and Ireland Place, 1946

CONCLUSION

Michael Capozzi and I, Robert Eastwood, were glad to have the opportunity to research this interesting historical topic. In addition we would like to thank the Amityville Library and Mr. Walter Saxton for their help and cooperation. We hope that we have done a good job of informing our readers about the changes in Amityville since WWII.

ENDNOTES

1. From the Journal "A Backward Glance", an article written by Cecil H. Ruggles
2. Ibid
3. Ibid

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V

AMITYVILLE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Linda Waegerle

The Amityville Department of Public Works has been in existence since the village was founded in 1894. However, they are more frequently referred to as the Highway Department. The Highway Department is responsible to maintain village property and make any necessary repairs. During the years, the responsibilities have basically stayed the same. However, there have been major changes in the equipment that is used. At one time they used to pull a rake behind a wagon to tend to the dirt roads. Now they have heavy duty trucks and powered equipment to perform their jobs.

During the 1950's the department had a crew of ten men to perform the different jobs. Now, they have a crew of fourteen; two of which are strictly maintenance and they are responsible for cleaning the municipal buildings. The municipal buildings include the police station and the fire house. They all work Monday through Thursday from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon. On Fridays, they work from seven until two forty-five. They belong to a union and receive full medical and dental care.

The Highway Department building used to be located behind the old fire house on Green Avenue. There they housed the few trucks and other equipment that they had at their disposal. In 1948 they announced the planned construction of a new Highway Department building. It was built to give them more room. It was also built to keep up with the Fire Department who had just had a new building built for them. The new Highway Department building, which is where they are currently at, cost the village approximately $45,000. When it was finished in 1949, it gave them garage and storage space for eleven pieces of equipment.

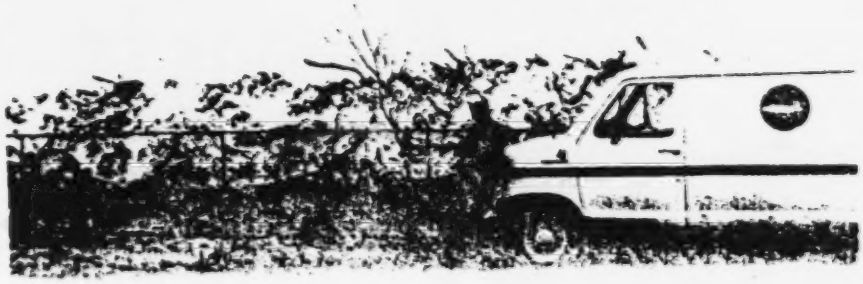
Over the years the Highway Department has acquired many pieces of equipment that helped them perform their many duties. They have dump trucks, pick-up trucks, a garbage truck, two payloaders, a back hoe, a sweeper, two snowblowers, eight snowplows, two rider mowers, a roller, lawnmowers, chainsaws, an air compression jackhammer, etc. They also have the equipment to make all the street signs that are in town. They install the signs as well as the parking meters. They are responsible for the maintenance of the meters and the signs.

The Amityville Department of Public Works is different than the Town of Babylon Department of Public Works. The Town of Babylon breaks its maintenance responsibilities into different departments that have only specific duties. For example, they have a Highway Department, a Maintenance Department, a Municipal Buildings and Grounds Department and several others. Amityville on the other hand, is responsible for all jobs in the village. They have to maintain and repair, when necessary, all roads, sidewalks, curbs, fences, village bulkheads, parks and other village property. They are also responsible for all impounded cars. During the warmer months, their main responsibility is lawn maintenance which includes fertilization and cutting. They also maintain the ballfields and the beach. During the colder months, their main job is snow removal and ice control. They also put up the christmas decorations and they decorate the tree.

EAST CONN. AUDUBON SOC.

The Highway Department was put to the test when Hurricane Gloria struck on September 27, 1985. Just before the hurricane, the Highway Department was awaiting the arrival of its new superintendent. Kendall Muncy, who was not scheduled to begin until September 30, began preparing two days before the hurricane. All the preparation was not enough for what they were about to face.

The village was covered with fallen trees. Many, if not all, streets were impassable. As soon as the hurricane passed, the Highway Department began clearing paths through the streets. They worked practically around the clock to make the roads accessible. They then began an extensive clean-up job for the next several weeks. In the beginning they were assisted by several students who were hired by the village. They also had the help of the drivers of the three additional dump trucks that they needed to clean-up quicker. The hours put in by the temporary help, plus the overtime put in by the regular workers, totaled over 1600 hours. This was in addition to the 4000 hours put in by the regular workers. They collected 10,000 cubic yards of brush from the storm which they are still burning five months after the hurricane. They still have other minor damages done by the hurricane that they have to repair.



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The superintendent and the foreman are always on call twenty-four hours a day. The workers are on call during the winter in case there is a snowstorm. They also might be called out if there is a natural disaster. They work in conjunction with the Police Department and the Fire Department. The police would call them if trees or tree limbs fall and obstruct traffic. The Fire Department sometimes needs their assistance in cleaning up after an accident.

Even though there are no requirements to become a member of the Highway Department, it is quite helpful if you have some knowledge of how to operate the different types of equipment they use. You also have to be willing to work outside during the freezing cold and during the intense heat.

VI

AMITYVILLE BAYLIFE

Andrew Nicholson and Butch Chichester

Amityville, "The Friendly Bay Village", is a small town with a rich history and family tradition. Amityville was founded in 1893 and is located on the South shore of Long Island. Its geographical location on the Great South Bay has played an important role in it's historical background.

Since the late 1940's, baylife in the Great South Bay has changed dramatically. Once a man could raise and support a family directly off his skills and abilities to master and make use of what is available to him by nature. The bay and its resources were a chief industry to many of the village's early families. These families, usually much larger than today's families, had different outlooks towards their responsibilities to secure the family's livelihood. Each family member had his own obligations to contribute.

Two of Amityville's Early Baymen Fish for Fluke on the Great South Bay

While the father and the older boys spent the day on the bay, the rest of the family had their share of work to do at home. The women did such tasks as stitch nets, weave eel traps, and clean the fisherman's catch. The children were responsible for such things as repacking shotgun shells, cleaning the equipment, and weaving ropes.

The complete bayman worked off the bay, not just seasonally, but all year round. He did not concentrate on just one form of sea life, but on

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Fishing Boat, Oars and Eel Spears from the 1940's

all of them. In the summer he concentrated mainly on fishing, crabbing, and clamming. During the winter, his time was devoted to eeling and hunting.

As a fisherman in the late 1940's and early 50's, there were positive and negative aspects in succeeding as a bay fisherman. During these early years the outboard motor was obsolete, thereby limiting the fisherman to fish within a reasonable distance from the shore. The best fishing areas were the ocean inlets, a half a day's journey for Amityville fishermen. These men were required to either sail or row to their desired fishing location. If someone wished to go out with a large party, they usually turned to one of the many "rent-a-boat" boatyards.

Handmade Rake Used to Rake Clams from the Mud

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Although introduced in the 1920's, the outboard motor did not become affordable to the average fisherman until the early 1960's. The outboard made it easier for the fishermen to live off the bay, but it also had its negative side effects. The gasoline and oil from the motors highly polluted the waters throughout the years, causing damage in the bay's food chain. Several species of plant life and fish were unable to survive the newly polluted waters and have therefore disappeared from the Great South Bay.

Handmade Decoys and Early Fishing Equipment of Amityville's Early Fishermen

During the village's early years the amounts and sizes of the fish were much greater than they are today. A 16 pound fluke, for instance, was a common occurance, while today a six pounder is a very respectable catch. As far as amounts are concerned, the fluke, like many of the fish, flourished during the days of the early baymen. Today, one could sit all day and not even get a bite.

There were many different species of fish which existed in abundancy that are practically extinct today. The sunfish, as quoted by fishing columnist, Jay Schick, in 1952, "can be found all over the bay." These fish are rarely found in the Great South Bay today. Such other species include weakfish, blackfish, whiting, and herring. On the contrary, some species have been able to survive and continue to inhabit the bay. These fish include bluefish, flounder, and fluke, as stated above.

Crabbing was another part of the fisherman's livelihood. Once done as an occupational interest, it is done today only for sport and occasional enjoyment. Quoting Jay Schick (July of 1954), "Blue claw crabs seem to be all over the (Great South) Bay."

Today the crabs are found only on dock sides and in some bay flats, and are of a much smaller size. Like the Alaskian King crab, the Blue Claws of the Great South Bay were once exported all over the Northeastern United States.

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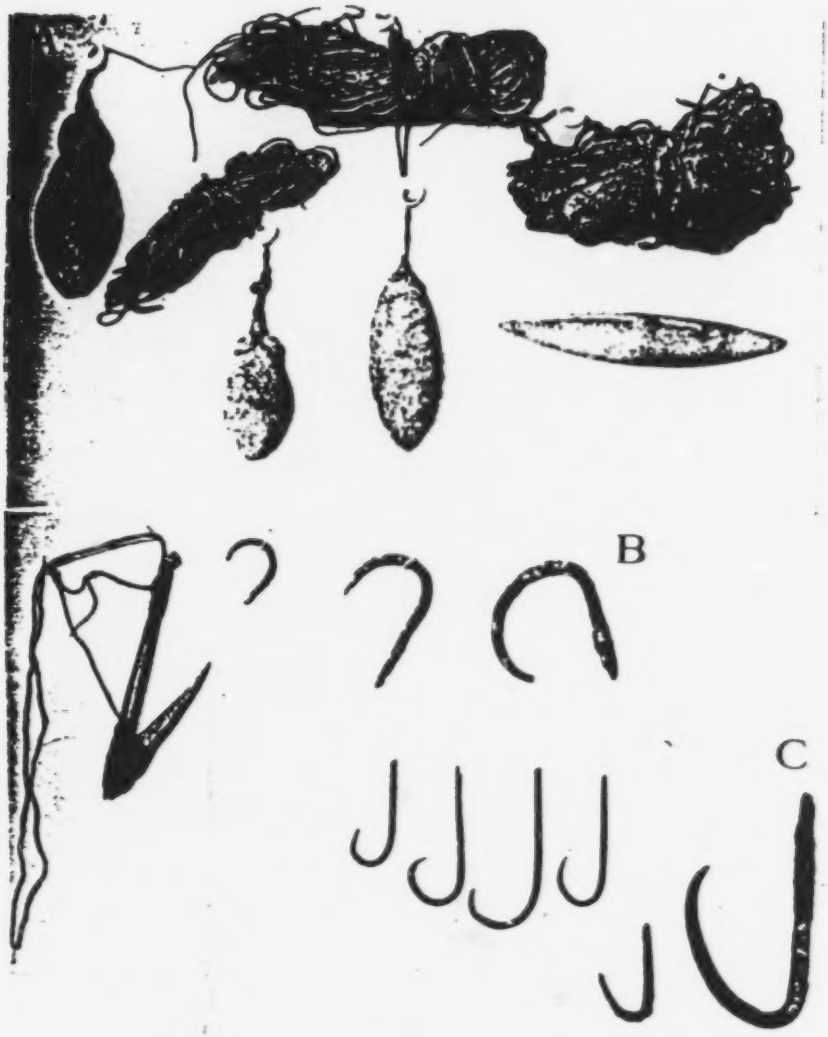

Wire Hooks and Stone Weights

As soon as winter arrived, the early fishermen looked towards eeling as a manner of income. Using handmade spears and traps, the fishermen chopped through the ice and began eeling for this slimy, snakelike fish that embeds itself in the mud. Today, eeling can be done the same way or even simpler by towing an eel dredger behind the boat. This dredger literally "rakes" the eels out of the mud. The amount of eels has not deteriorated as much as other sealife in the bay and a decent amount can still be obtained in some of Amityville's larger canals.

One of the major industries which has stood the test of time is the clamming and scalloping of the Great South Bay. Because expensive equipment is not necessary and it can be done all year round, clamming had become a popular and successful industry for many of Amityville's early fishermen. The early years of clamming were, and still are, very simple. One can use a clamrake or his bare feet to find the different types of clams. For those who clam commercially, a clam dredge can be towed behind a boat, similarly to the eel dredger. Within the last 10 years, the state of New York has replenished the legal clam beds of the Great South Bay with

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small clams known as seeds. The state has also set up new laws which limit the amount of clams to be taken at one outing.

Since the late 1940's, the equipment used by baymen has clearly changed for the better. With modern technology comes a vast amount of knowledge towards quicker and better production of such things as fishing rods, nets, rakes, boats, etc.

Through modernization and man's relentless lack of concern, the Great South Bay, once a healthy and popular source of a bayman's income, has deteriorated into a polluted and less profitable industry. It is very rare to find an Amityville bayman who supports himself solely off the bay. Since the end of World War II to the present, we have seen a major part of Amityville's history dwindle. Let's hope this is not an indication of our society's destiny.

VII

THE AMITYVILLE RECORD: PAST AND PRESENT

Anthony Sarubbe and Alan Rios

The Amityville Record, the town's weekly paper, came into existence on May 7, 1904. The editor and founder was Charles F. Delano. As early as 1890, there was a paper by the name of the Amityville Dispatch. Delano purchased the Dispatch and reestablished it as the Amityville Record.

In the first issue, Delano explained his reasons for starting the paper. He stated, "I have bought the Dispatch with the belief that Amityville both wants and needs a newspaper which will gather and print the news of the villages and the vicinity... I think that Amityville needs a good paper because Amityville has possibilities of growth, and any community which has a future better than its past needs a newspaper." (1)

In the early days, the Record was four to six pages long. The first page was "ready print", which means it was previously printed elsewhere and then shipped to the Record. The front page consisted mainly of headlines concerning the Amityville community and its neighboring towns, much as it does today. The inside pages were devoted to the advertising of local businesses. One of the main advertisements was for W. Powell's Livery Stables. Over the years the stables became garages for motorized taxis. Also storage space was rented in connection with the furniture moving business. W. Powell advertised in the Record for many years until he went out of business. Advertisements such as this were standard for the Record and were printed on a weekly basis. The type was set entirely by hand, letter by letter, which was a rather tedious and time-consuming task. However, since these advertisements were printed regularly, they only had to be set once and then they were used over and over. Two other typical advertisements were for "Tea and Coffee" and "Honest Shoe Repairing." Today the Record's advertisements are also mainly for the local businesses.

Along with the front and back pages of news and advertisements, which filled up the bulk of the paper, Charles Delano printed a weekly editorial. He wrote about anything that caught his attention, whether it was a local Amityville event or a major issue which concerned the entire nation. He never pulled punches. If he felt it was important, he would print it.

In the May 21, 1904 issue of the Record, Delano made this statement in his editorial, "To avoid any misapprehension I hereby state that I am the sole owner and proprietor of the Amityville Record which succeeds to the business of the Amityville Dispatch." (2) Here Delano clearly states that he is solely responsible for any business concerning the Amityville Record.

In the same issue, other local papers had small articles printed in the Record in which they recognize it. The papers were the Port Jefferson Times, the South Side Signal of Babylon, the Nassau County Review of Freeport, the Suffolk County Bulletin of Huntington, and the Long Island Enterprise of Amityville and Greater New York area. The Port Jefferson Times and Nassau County Review merely recognized the existence of the Record. The Port Jefferson Times remarked, "The Amityville Dispatch, edited by Henry Languillette has been succeeded by the Amityvile Record." (3)

The South Side Signal and the Suffolk County Bulletin welcomed the

SOMETHING GOOD TO DRINK

from all lands where good Teas and Coffees are grown, will be found here. Not directly, of course, but through the most reliable importers. We receive a new supply of

TEA AND COFFEE

at regular intervals, thus securing absolutefreshness to our customers.

"Unqua"—The Perfect Coffee.

Amityville, L. I.

W. Powell's Livery Stables.

AMITYVILLE, L. I.

Boarding. Sales and Exchange Stables.

CONTRACTING, TEAMING, AND CARTING.

Train and Funeral Calls Met.

Stable Supplies.

New and Second-Hand Wagons and Carriages for sale.

Record into the business. The South Side Signal read, "To the editor of the Record we extend a hearty welcome and we hope for him success in his venture." (4) The Suffolk County Bulletin wrote, "We have received the first issue of the rejuvenated Amityville Dispatch, now known as the Amityville Record, which is published by editor Charles F. Delano ... We welcome him to the ranks and trust he will receive the support he deserves." (5)

The Long Island Enterprise had a critical tone toward the Record. "With this issue the Amityville Dispatch passes into new ownership. It will be the Amityville Record hereafter." The Enterprise inquires as to why Delano bought the Dispatch. The article goes on, "So what was actually bought and paid for, destroyed and wasted for the Record, could have been started for all appearances without buying the Dispatch except perhaps the latter was formidable competition that should be gotten out of the way." The Enterprise seemed insulted when it said, "Bid editor Delano of the Record a good-speed in his high chosen mission of giving Amityville a 'good paper' because she has none and deserves at least one ... his ambition be fulfilled in rare good times and with unparalled success." (6)

It is interesting to note that the Port Jefferson Times, South Side Signal, Nassau County Review, Suffolk County Bulletin, and Long Island Enterprise are now no longer being printed. The Amityville Record has triumphed and outlived them all.

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Honest Shoe Repairing!

I have opened a new shoe repairing shop in the Hartman Building on Broadway. I have the latest mechanical appliances for doing up-to-date repairing for the least money and use the BEST OF WHITE OAK LEATHER. I am prepared to do honest satisfactory repairing at the following prices:

Half sole,	40 cents.
Heels,	20 "
Ladies' half sole,	30 "
Ladies' heels,	15 "
Boys' half sole,	35 "
Children's half sole,	25 "
Hand sewed men's half sole and heel,	90 "
Ladies' hand sewed half sole and heel,	65 "

Work done while you wait, if necessary.
Remember! Best work guaranteed and prices lowes .

S. Stockman,

The Amityville Rapid Shoe Rpairing Shop.

Broadway, opposite Lyceum, AMITYVILLE, L. I.

The following interviews were conducted by Anthony Sarubbe and Alan Rios. The gentlemen interviewed were Mr. John Schultz, a lifetime resident of Amityville, and Mr. Seth Purdy, the present curator of the Amityville Historical Society (Lauder Museum).

A.R.: When you were a kid, did you and your family read the Amityville Record?

J.S.: Oh yes, we used to have it delivered every week.

A.R.: How much did you depend on the paper?

J.S.: Actually, it gave us all the news of the town and it also had a history column in there like what happened 15 to 30 years ago. Events that happened to people and on different happenings on years gone by.

A.R.: Did you know Charles F. Delano personally?

J.S.: Not intimately, but I knew him from seeing him around the town, and once in a while I would talk to him. He was a newspaperman, so he would talk to everyone.

A.R.: Do you still read the Amityville Record?

J.S.: No, I don't get it anymore, but when I was a kid, we used to pay 15 cents for each issue delivered. I used to look forward to getting that paper because it had upcoming school events and articles on local people. It was a small paper, only about four to six pages, which had advertisements on local business people. Charles Delano used to write his own editorials and he would come right out with things. If he didn't like anything about national politics, he would

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come right out with it.

A.R.: Did you depend on the paper for worldly news?

J.S.: Oh, not too much because we used to get the Brooklyn Eagle. I used to deliver that paper everyday. But actually, the Amityville Record gave all the news of Amityville, and sometimes Massapequa and Copiague, and anything in the local area.

A.R.: Did the Amityville Record publish anything outside the state?

J.S.: Unless something big came up. They would comment on it. Anything Delano thought was newsworthy he would publish. Also some of his articles used to be quoted by other people. Even as a boy I enjoyed reading it, even his humorous articles. I'll tell you the truth, I would love today to browse through all of the old papers if they had them.

* * * * *

This interview was given by Mr. Seth Purdy.

A.S.: Was there a basic format change in the Amityville Record?

S.P.: I would say that the format basically stayed the same, even the size of the paper and even the editorial column.

A.S.: Did you know Charles F. Delano personally?

S.P.: Yes, I knew him. Jessie Gunnison was his daughter ... so they were the last of the Delano family that owned the Record. I think after Gunnison it was Lou Howard who became the owner of the Record. But I think the Gunnisons remained there and ran the paper for Lou Howard. He was the owner, but they continued to run the paper, the Gunnisons. Then after that it was sold to Ira Kahn. Now it's been sold to the Pennysaver. You know the Pennysaver, are you familiar with that? Well, they are the ones who own the paper now.

A.S.: What was a typical article one might expect to find in the Record years ago?

S.P.: If somebody went in their car, say to Freeport or something like that, it would be in the Record - Mrs. So and So motored to Freeport. They always motored places so that's the type of news the paper carried, local interest news.

A.S.: So, in other words, the Record wrote about community events?

S.P.: They were always interested in the community growing, progressing. The paper kept constantly reporting on things progressing in the community. How Amityville was growing and becoming a real town. That was always a big issue.

* * * * *

Four thousand five hundred copies of the Amityville Record are currently printed every week. As it has been for years, the Record consists chiefly of local news and advertising. The paper is circulated throughout

THE AMITYVILLE RECORD

THE RECORD BUILDING, 10 GREENE AVENUE
AMITYVILLE, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK
Telephone: AMityville 4-0077 or 0078
CHARLES F. DELANO 1904-1964
Editor and Publisher

WALTER B. GUNNISON, Editor
LOUIS T. HOWARD, Publisher

The Amityville Record is published weekly on Thursday mornings at Amityville, New York, Entered as second-class mail matter at the Post Office at Amityville, N.Y. under the Act of Congress on March 2, 1879.

Subscription rates (payable in advance) one year four dollars, six months three dollars.

THEN AND NOW, NOW AND THEN

In introducing The Amityville Record on May 7, 1904, Charles F. Delano remarked that "any community which has a future better than its past needs a newspaper."

This is ironical, in a way, because now, in 1969, you can meet people who are under the definite impression that the past of Amityville and the rest of the country was better than anything that can be anticipated. Only last Sunday, a man born and raised here remarked, "I've seen the best of this country right now."

This, of course, can be explained by what people see on television, and the newspaper headlines. There is much talk these days about the explicit nature of various kinds of advertising,

Letters To The Record

A THRILLING ADDITION

Editor, The Amityville Record:

Amityville should be "popping its buttons" with pride this week. Our wonderful community has been resounding with the marvelous tunes of "Guys and Dolls" all weekend. Approximately one hundred youths and adults have worked together for months, with great enjoyment as their reward, to finally present a gay, colorful, exciting professional production.

For those who missed seeing it, there will be two more performances next weekend.

The Amityville Community Theatre is a thrilling addition to our village and deserves the support of everyone — so that they will become as much a part of us as the parade on July fourth.

To the members of the cast, crew and orchestra, we thank you.

Dr. and Mrs. Norman Klein

An hour of farm labor currently produces more than six times the food and crops that it did in 1919-1921.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Town of Babylon

Pursuant to provisions of Article XV of the Building Zone Ordinance for the Town of Babylon, Babylon, N.Y., Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeals for the Town of Babylon will hold a Public Hearing in the Town House, 200 East Sunrise Highway, North Lindenhurst, N.Y., on Thursday Evening, May 22, 1969 at 8:00 P.M., to consider the following applications:

1. Application of Hildegarde Lynch, 171 Cumberbach Street, Wyandanch, N.Y. for

Amityville and its surrounding areas.

The Record periodically prints "Anniversary Issues." In these issues the Record reprints previous articles. It's a nostalgic event - "a strolling down memory lane" for the readers. By doing this readers of the Record can go back in time and see what was happening in their community years ago. Many people enjoy reading about Amityville's past and comparing it to the present. Mr. John Schultz, for example, said, "I'll tell you the truth, I would love today to browse through all of the old papers, if they

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had them." (7)

The Amityville Record has been wisely preserved on microfilm. The Eisenhower Park Reference Center and Museum has every issue on tape. Also Amityville's own Historical Society (Lauder Museum) has a great many of the actual papers. Plus the Historical Society has almost all of the issues on film.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles F. Delano, Amityville Record, May 7, 1904.

2. Ibid, May 21, 1904.

3. Port Jefferson Times, Amtyville Record, May 21, 1904.

4. South Side Signal, Amityville Record, May 21, 1904.

5. Suffolk County Bulletin, Amityville Record, May 21, 1904.

6. Long Island Enterprise, Amityville Record, May 21, 1904.

7. Mr. John Schultz, February 28, 1986.

* * * SPECIAL THANKS * * *

We would like to extend a personal thank you to the following people for their help, time, and contributions towards this paper.

Mr. John Schultz, a lifetime resident of Amityville

Mr. Seth Purdy, Curator of the Amityville Historical Society

Ms. Elodie Dibbins, Amityville Historical Society

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VIII

THE VILLAGE GOVERNMENT OF AMITYVILLE - 1945 - 1986

Christopher J. Ubert and Roger A. DeMoore

Government is defined as being groups of officials who make the laws and direct affairs. It is at the local town or village level that most people understand and appreciate government. People feel more in touch with their village government because the village government's actions involve them directly. The familiarity of the officials to the people creates community involvement and interest in local affairs.

Throughout the history of Amityville, the people have always been interested and involved in village government. The concern of the people of Amityville to create a better village has resulted in the "Friendly Bay Village" as we know it today. In the past, the people of Amityville were generally of the well-to-do, more educated class of the town of Babylon. This enabled them to obtain great influence in town government. But as time passed, the people of Amityville came to the conclusion that they could be governed better if they set up their own government. In 1893, the people of Amityville separated themselves from the unincorporated areas of the Town of Babylon and became a village.

The main body of the Amityville village government consists of a mayor, a Village Justice, and 4 Village Trustees. Other facets of village government include the Board of Appeals, and the Associate Village Justice. Overall, the individual with the most power in Amityville's government would have to be the Mayor.

MAYORS OF AMITYVILLE - 1945 - 1986

NELSON OSBOURNE - 1947 - 1952

HERBERT CARPENTER - 1953 - 1954

GEORGE KENNEDY - 1955 - 1960

ARTHUR BURNS - 1962 - 1966

LOUIS HOWARD - 1967 - 1970

HUMBERT MARTIN - 1970 - 1980

VICTOR NIEMI - 1981 - Present

The Mayor is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer, and receives all of his power from the state. Among the Mayor's many powers are his abilities to preside over and set the agenda for all village government meetings, and to appoint the members of both the Board of Appeals and the Planning Board.

The #1 goal of the current Mayor, Vic Niemi, is to "drag Amityville screaming and kicking into the 20th century." (1) Without the proper development of industry, the burden of much of the village expenses would fall on Amityville residents in the form of tax increases. Although Mayor Niemi recognizes the strong need for industry, he refuses to allow any riff

raff, low grade type organizations to open up shop in the village. He would much rather welcome first class establishments such as the Amityville Men's Shop, Berger Bros., and other quality stores like these to establish their businesses here in Amityville.

Amityville Men's Shop located in the village, one of the first class businesses in the village of Amityville

Berger Bros. Camera Exchange, another 1st class business establishment in the village

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When asked the question "Have you noticed any particular change in Amityville over recent years?," the mayor replied that he has noticed a younger population in Amityville now, as compared to when he was first elected. He feels that one reason for this might be due to the fact that the cost of buying a house in Amityville is cheaper in comparison to some of the surrounding communities such as Massapequa. Another reason, replied Mayor Niemi is that "People are moving to Amityville to capture some of that oldtime flavor." (2)

The period of time in which Amityville's government was most active is that from 1945 to the present. Amityville has always been what is known as a "backwater community." This is to say that the village has never been anxious to advance with the changing times. Amityville's "backwater" characteristics proved to be an asset for the village during this period of time because of the great industrial growth that the Town of Babylon witnessed. Strict zoning laws enabled Amityville to retain its spaciousness, as other areas in the town were cut into small plots of land becoming less attractive neighborhoods.

During an interview with Mr. William Lauder, former Supervisor of the Town of Babylon, Mr. Lauder stressed the importance of zoning and the will of the leaders as well as the people of Amityville to preserve the comfortable lifestyle and the homey appearance of their village. Mr. Lauder stated that a main reason for the different atmosphere and appearance of Amityville is that during the period of great expansion (population wise and development wise) "the village government did not want the great onrush of populants to overwhelm the community." (3) This desire of the village government was noticeable even before the post-war era, and could be seen in such actions as the altering of the Sunrise Highway development to prevent the roadway from passing directly through and disrupting the tranquility of the village.

Although village resistance to change was strong, every establishment must advance and expand to some extent in order to survive in the changing world around it. In 1959, a major excavation took place in downtown Amityville. All of the stores and shops on the east side of Broadway (Rt. 110) were demolished in order to widen the roadway. This, according to Mr. William Lauder was "an opportunity to rebuild and restructure the business section of the village." (4) The opportunity to rebuild wasn't completely taken advantage of by the village government at this time, but great progress has been made in the village during the last 9 years.

The village government of the late 1960's began to realize the importance of Amityville's history to the people, so "in 1969, the Amityville Historical Society was founded to record and preserve the heritage of the community." (5) The people of Amityville became interested in this preservation of heritage, and during the early 1970's focused their attention on the old colonial houses of the village. "It became apparent to residents that the old houses, now surrounded by a business district to the north and south needed protection." (6) Again government involvement reflected the will of the people when the Village Board of Trustees approved a rezoning, and declared certain parts of Amityville "historical areas."

When a shoping mall appeared in the area in 1974, the village of Amityville witnessed a serious economic decline. This decline in local business activity is what led the residents and government of Amityville to once again consider rebuilding the Amityville business district.

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One of the colonial homes on South Broadway protected by the Village Government as a Historical Landmark

Johnson's Florist, another colonial shop on South Broadway protected by the Village Government as a Historical Landmark

Due to the decline in revenues caused by the new mall, "a group of concerned residents and merchants banded together in 1977 to form the Amityville Downtown Refurbishment Committee." (7) The main purpose of this group was to recommend and plan changes to better the village's appearance.

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The committee decided that Amityville should restore its "friendly bay village" heritage by changing to resemble a colonial bay village.

With the help of village, town, state, and private funding, the village was able to enact and adopt its plan of creating a village theme in Amityville. Unsightly elements such as parking meters were removed and strict codes to keep most village development with the "colonial bay village" theme became law.

The areas surrounding downtown Amityville have also undergone changes over the years. During the 1950's, the village was upzoned and the plots of undeveloped land that still existed were redevided and made larger. Many plots south of Merrick Road and north of the railroad tracks were rezoned and turned into light industrial areas. Village government recognized that some industry was necessary if Amityville was to survive as a prosperous community. The government controlled the spread of industry superbly as "it organized the growth and kept it in line with good principles of land use." (8)

Aside from having a very attractive community, the people of Amityville are also privileged with having the protection of their own private Police Department. This benefit was made available in the 1950's by Suffolk County and its leaders. The county gave each village the choice of either owning and operating their own Police Department, or remaining with the county Police Department. Being that the people of Amityville had always tried to separate themselves, it came as no surprise to anyone that when given this opportunity, Amityville chose to have its own Police Department to maintain order in the village.

The majority of other Suffolk County villages elected to be a part of the county provided Police Department. It was the elected officials and other influential people of the community who decided that not enough was known about the county Police Department to join it at that time. This turned out to be a wise decision because if this private Police Department didn't work out, the village could always join the county's department. However, once a village joined the county department, it was for good.

Thanks to the excellent decision of the village government during the 1950's, Amityville now has its own Police Department, as well as access to the use of Suffolk County's Police Headquarters. The use of County Headquarters means that Amityville has access to the county police lab, detectives, and back-up when needed. The decision to increase or decrease police protection was another positive aspect of this decision. If the village government had decided to join the county Police Department, then the decision to increase or decrease police protection in Amityville would be made in Riverhead, some 50 miles away. This is the basis of the theme of "home rule" that is the byword of Amityville's village government.

Over the years, village residents of Amityville have enjoyed the convenience of having their own government. The "home rule" concept of government has kept the people of Amityville together since the village was formed. Amityville residents have always been familiar with their leaders and, on a whole, have been very active in village government themselves.

Thus, the actions of the village government, due to much community involvement, have always reflected the will of the people.

FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with Mayor Niemi, March 4, 1986
2. Ibid
3. Interview with William Lauder, February 14, 1986
4. Ibid
5. "Village of Amityville - Main Street Project - The Way it Was", report in possession of Mrs. Virginia Stone
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Interview with William Lauder

THE EXPANSION OF THE AMITYVILLE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Robert Goodman and Bradley Herman

To get a better understanding of how the Amityville School System came into being, we had to go back to the nineteenth century. The Amityville School System was not half as big as it is now. In the year 1872, as a matter of fact, there was only one very small school. The school was a very beautiful wooden school located on Broadway, opposite Avon Place. That school is presently known as Amity Battery and Ignition Company.

A new school had to be constructed. The name of this new school was the Amityville Union School. Seven students graduated from there in the year 1893. The graduation was held at the Lyceum at 8:00 P.M. on a Friday, June 30th. This school turned into a supermarket and is now two separate companies.

When this school was changed, a new school came about. This was the year that the village became incorporated. The new school that was built was Park North. This happened in the year, 1894.

There was a minor setback in the school system, however, when Amityville witnessed a diptheria epidemic. This temporarily closed the schools in 1895.

Another school was built prior to World War I. This school was called Park South. Both of these schools were located on Park Avenue. They were, and still are, located on the left side as you go toward the village.

Not another school was needed until World War I was over. The new school to be built was Park Central. This was to be the Junior High. It was named Park Central for the obvious reason that it was located between Park North and Park South. The original plan of the Board of Education was to connect Park Central and Park South with a dome. When the time came to do this, they had to notify Albany of the plan. Albany rejected the plan. If the plan had not been rejected, the dome would have doubled the amount of space for teaching.

At this time, Park North became the elementary school, Park Central became the Junior High, and Park South became the High School. Now, Park Central and Park South are for fourth and fifth graders respectively. Park North is now used as a big office building for the Board of Education.

We found out while interviewing Mr. Walter Saxton that, in 1929, there were only 49 people in his graduating class from Park South. That's 161 less than the number of those who should graduate from Amityville High School this year. There were about 200 people in his whole High School as compared to about 800 students in grades 10, 11 and 12 in 1986.

The Amityville School System went from seven students graduating in 1893 to 210 in 1986. This is an example of how our population grew over the years, and how it will continue to grow.

After World War II, there was a tremendous increase in population. This made it necessary to build a new school. This school was to be located on Merrick Road. It was to be called, and still is called, the Amityville Memorial High School. This school took many years of thinking.

1894
PARK NORTH SCHOOL
Amityville, L. I.

It as the Board of Education who planned for the postwar increase in population. Those people who participated in the planning were Herbert Landry, Advisory Committee of the Board of Education, the faculty of the Amityville High School, the Department of Education of the State of New York, and Carl Stelling and John H. Langos, landscape architects and site planners.

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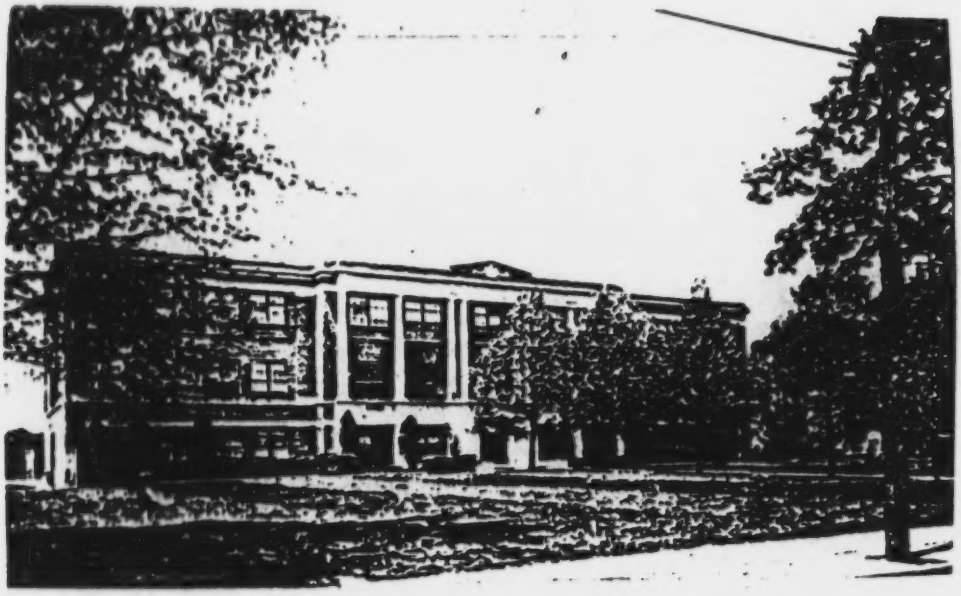
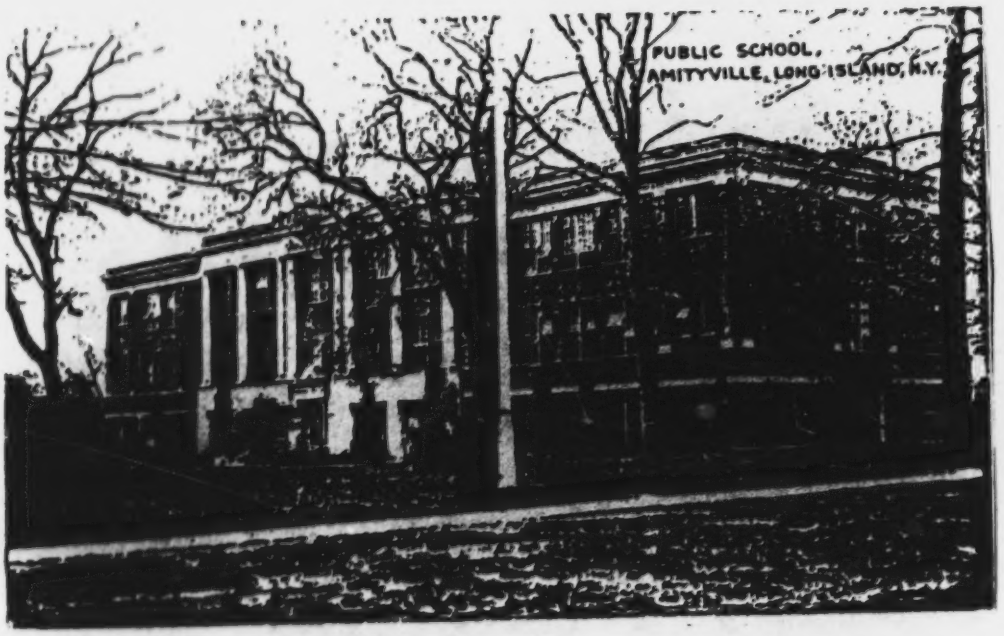


Park South



Park Central

The plot of land where the High School is located was originally intended to be a memorial park. It was built there for many good reasons. First of all, it was convenient for the entire district. It was a large enough piece of property to provide for the size of the school needed for the growing community. It also would have enough parking space which would

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be needed for recreational needs, as well as students and teachers who drive to school. The school was to have a sewing and clothing room, a food laboratory, an arts and crafts classroom, mechanical drawing room, biology room, chemistry and physics laboratory, and a general wood shop, as well as a metal shop.

Also, the school was to have two executive offices, a library, and twenty classrooms, not including the science rooms, the shops, and the gym.

The appearance of the building was made as nice as possible without sacrificing any health or safety rules. The school was made of bricks and painted white. It has two statues of eagles facing the street and steps leading to a plaza, with the flagpole in the middle.

The building was originally planned to hold 800 students. It holds more than that today.

The central part of the building is mainly for classrooms. On the west side of the school is the auditorium and on the east end of the school is the gymnasium.

The landscaping of this school provides for soccer, football, handball, track, tennis, baseball, softball, and, at that time, field hockey. It was made for the use of school teams as well as for the use of recreational facilities during the summer. All this is located in the back of the school. On the east side there is a driveway that leads to Bayview Avenue and Merrick Road. On the west there is a driveway that leads to Avon Place and Merrick Road.

The school was designed not only to serve students, but also adults. It provides them with recreation as well as a meeting place.

The high school is a memorial for those who gave their lives in World War II in order to preserve freedom.

The high school was opened to its first graduating class in 1952. Even though the graduation was held there, the students who graduated that year were graduates from the old high school, Park South. The school did not officially open to its first teachers and students until September of 1952.

A new school was again needed around the year 1957. This is when the Northeast and Northwest schools opened. Northeast was to accommodate kindergarten and first grade. Northwest accommodated second and third grade.

Northeast is located on Albany Avenue in the northern part of Amityville. It has a playground for children with swings and monkeybars. It also has a big field for children to play in during their lunch break. It is a red brick building, facing the road. It has enough room to hold class for two grades. The school was opened to students on September 4, 1957.

Northwest is very much like Northeast. It is also a red brick building. The school faces County Line Road. It has a soccer field and a baseball field. It also has a playground and a large field for children to play on. Just like Northeast, Northwest was opened to students on September 4, 1957.

Both of these schools serve the same grades as mentioned above today.

They are also both located in the northern part of Amityville.

The last school that was built for the town of Amityville was the present-day Junior High. This school is located on Route 110, just above Sunrise Highway if you are traveling north.

This school is the biggest in Amityville. It has room enough to accommodate 1500 students.

The first thought to build this school was on June 24, 1957. A meeting was held in Albany. Those who attended were the Board of Education and the building experts of the State Department of Education. The architects who planned the school were John F. Sanglois and Knappe and Johnson.

This school was a three story building. It was made for grades six through nine, since there was only room enough for three grades in the High School. It had a large round cafeteria, a gymnasium, a music room, shop rooms, and the offices, and then, of course, the classrooms.

The grounds are very large. There is a soccer field, a football field, a baseball field, a softball field, and plenty of room for kids to socialize on their lunch period.

The driveway for the buses is in a semi-circle so the buses can enter one side and leave through the other without having to turn around.

The school was opened to students in September of 1960. The school's official name is the Edmund W. Miles Amityville Junior High School.

The Amityville school system is structured in the following way:

Northeast for kindergarten and first grade
Northwest for second and third grades
Park Central for fourth grade
Park South for fifth grade
Junior High for grades six through nine
High School for grades ten through twelve.

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THE CRIMSON TIDE: RICH IN TRADITION

James Stemmle

The Amityville Memorial High School football team has been setting records since the 1950's. I will be concentrating on two eras which are considered the most influential of all. These periods were coached by Lou Howard (1953 - 1961), and Vic Niemi. These two coaches, in particular, have coached the Crimson Tide to over 10 championship seasons, and over 6 undefeated league seasons.

Coach Howard

Coach Niemi

Lou Thom Howard, in 10 years of Varsity football coaching, has given Amityville High School teams 10 consecutive Championships for a win - loss record of 82 wins and only 7 losses (.915%). Coach Howard used the old work ethic philosophy which involved strong discipline and desire as keys to victory. Lou Howard gave the Amityville Tradition a sufficient base by coaching the Crimson Tide to undefeated seasons in 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960 and 1961. He had only 3 losses in league play in 11 seasons. Coach Howard had the glory of coaching the only team in Long Island history to retire the Rutgers Cup, which is the symbol of football supremacy on Long Island.

Besides coaching some of the greatest High School teams in history, he also had the pleasure to coach some of the best players at the time. Lou Howard coached the running back who broke Jim Brown's high school scoring record; Bernie Wyatt, who scored 170 points in 1956. Coach Howard turned out 3 high school All-Americans; John Cutillo (Notre Dame), Bernie Wyatt (University of Iowa) and John Niland (University of Iowa).

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Unidentifiable Ball Carrier Gaining Hard-Fought Yards

Lou Howard also started many traditions while he was at the helm at Amityville. He started the most popular tradition by giving uniform #31 to the team's best running back. He first awarded the #31 jersey to Gordon Carberry, who left it to Donald Keller, and after Donald it was given to Bernie Wyatt. Bernie could not hand his jersey down to anyone because Howard decided to have the team vote on it. Another tradition Howard started was changing the attire worn on the day of a game. The traditional garb was the overcoat, the jacket, tie and fedora. He changed it to the black sweater and the white baseball cap. He was quoted as calling this a "psychological gimmick."

Coach Howard was also known for using "gimmicks". He used every gimmick to the best advantage. He used old letters he had received from former players wishing they were playing for him again. He often made up some of those letters just to get the team emotionally charged.

Because Coach Howard was such a great motivator, he won many Coach of the Year honors. He won the Newsday Big 9 Coach of the Year Award 3 straight years (53 - 55). In 1956 he became the only Suffolk County coach to ever win the Daily News Coach of the Year award. He even won the Newsday and the Long Island Daily Press Coach of the Year awards during the years, 1956 to 1961.

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Coach Howard ended his Amityville coaching career the way he started it, with a winning tradition. In his final year he coached the Amityville Crimson Tide to another championship. He wrote a book, The Modern Short Punt: A Winning Formation, which gives you insight into the success of his short punt formation.

Vic Niemi had a very impressive start in varsity football. He was the youngest (20) man ever to speak at the Suffolk County Football Coach's Clinic. He was also the youngest man ever to be named head coach and then become the youngest head coach ever to win a championship.

Coach Niemi was also known for using a lot of "gimmicks". One of the most original ideas occurred when Amityville was going for the school's 200th victory. The team manager put adhesive tape on the helmets with the number 200 on them. He used this as a tool to get the team pumped up. The tape worked, as Amityville gained its 200th victory.

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AMHS Crimson Tide, Capping 3-2-2 Overall Season

Coach Voliton with His Captains
in His Inagural Season

In Vic Niemi's tenure, he brought Amityville, New York State's most prestigious football school, it's 18th and 19th championship, it's 11th undefeated season, and it's 8th, 9th and 10th All-Americans.

In 1969, Vic Niemi was named Suffolk County Coach of the year, League III, by his fellow coaches. Again in 1970 Vic Niemi was given the same honor, Suffolk County Coach of the Year, League IV.

The Crimson Tide has seen many coaches through the years after Niemi. Jeff Enck was assisted by Norm Maisel in the late 70's and early 80's. Coach Enck was replaced by William Kretz in 1981, keeping

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Maisel as Assistant coach. During Coach Enck and the early years of Kretz, the Crimson Tide had several mediocre seasons. After another mediocre season, the Tide hit a very dry spell and lost most of their games. William Kretz was replaced as head coach in 1984. Kretz left the Crimson Tide with a 13 game losing streak.

Kretz's successor, Roy Voliton, did not fare too well in his first season either, going 0 wins and 8 losses. Coach Voliton was about to shock the Amityville football tradition by retiring #31 and #77, both symbols of individual excellence. Coach Voliton did this to give the team a sense of unity because no one was considered the best. Coach Voliton also reinstated the Black Watch. The Black Watch was Amityville's feared defense of the sixties and seventies. Through these changes the team has taken on a new look, a look of changing with the times. The "tide" turned in 1985, with the Crimson Tide going 3 wins and 3 losses, breaking the 21 game losing streak in the season opener.

The Amityville Crimson Tide has gone through draughts and championship seasons. Even though the Tide has had problems in recent years, Amityville is still very much enriched with a winning tradition.

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XI

THE AMITYVILLE HORROR: THE FACTS AND EFFECTS

Patty Muir and Jennifer Nicholson

It was November 13, 1974. The clock had just struck 3:00 AM, and while his family lay defenseless in their beds, absorbed in deep sleep, Ronald DeFeo, Jr. paced through the three story house on 112 Ocean Avenue. The town of Amityville slept peacefully, oblivious to the rampage taking place in the neighboring home. They would soon awaken and experience a turn of events that would change their lives in a way they never could have imagined. Amityville - the Friendly Bay Village, would soon be known as the site of the Amityville Horror.

The "Haunted House"

Was Ronald DeFeo sane in his actions? Was he fully conscious while he went from room to room and shot every member of his family to death? Or was he psychologically not responsible for his actions? Whether he was or not, there was no way for him to know that his actions that night would not only affect himself and family members, but also change his neighbor's lives and the town they live in into a nightmare in the years to come.

Once DeFeo was charged with the murders of his two brothers, two sisters, and his parents, and put safely away in jail, the house stood empty and the mortgage was held by a local bank. No one wanted to buy the house, until George and Kathy Lutz moved in. The Lutz's bought the house in December of the following year; it was very inexpensive due to the fact that it had previously housed a mass-murderer and his victims. After 28 days they fled, claiming to be the subjects of an unexplainable evil force coming from within the house.

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"The names of several individuals mentioned in this book have been changed to protect their privacy. However, all facts and events as far as we have been able to verify them, are strictly accurate." (1)

Jay Anson's Book

Jay Anson opens his book, The Amityville Horror - A True Story, with this statement. He was inspired to write it by the Lutzes after they fled from the supposedly haunted house. What actually went on at 112 Ocean Avenue during those 28 days, we will never know. But the fact is that what they claimed to have happened has had a serious effect on the residents of the town and surrounding villages.

The Lutzes claimed to have shared their fears with friends and neighbors. In an excerpt from Newsday, February 14, 1976, it stated: ".... Within days they moved out, leaving their furniture, and telling their friends and neighbors the house was haunted." (2) An average reader would normally believe or consider this statement as true. But after speaking with Mrs. Joanne Millstein, who lives one house north of the famed house, and the Ireland family, who live one house south of it, we changed our opinions of how neighborly the Lutzes actually were.

It seems rather peculiar that the Lutzes experienced such terror, but not once did the neighbors on either side hear from them or see any strange occurrences whatsoever. We also found out that they never notified the police with any complaints. Not only did the neighbors not hear or see anything, but the Lutzes made a point of letting them know they wanted nothing to do with them. One occurrence oncerning the Lutz's unneighborly actions was when Mrs. Ireland invited the Lutz children to come in for doughnuts. Mrs. Lutz came outside ranting and raving and would not allow any type of communication between the neighbors.

Another misconception that the Lutzes explain in the book is an invisible pig named "Jodi" supposedly seen by their daughter. Once again Mrs. Ireland disproved this alleged occurrence. The bright eyes of the Ireland's Siamese cat, who made a habit of sitting on their window ledge, was all the Lutzes could have possibly seen.

Although the residents of Amityville acknowledged the book with scorn, and felt it contained many falsities seemingly ridiculous to them, the story has many believers. "They treat it like a religion. They stand in front of it with their hands together." (3) Mrs. Ireland speaks of the "ghostwatchers", as she calls the herds of people who flock to the house to

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take snapshots and watch the comings and goings of the present owners, the Cromartys. At the time that the book was published, the quiet street became an out of control tourist attraction. Not only was it a site for curious visitors to the area, but the block also attracted many vandalists and inconsiderate meddlers.

Many of the people who made a point to visit Amityville for the sole purpose of seeing the "haunted" house, were just eager to get a glimpse of it, and snap a picture of themselves in front of it. But there were just as many, if not more, who were violently destructive during their visits. Not only was damage done to the actual "Amityville Horror," but the normalcy of the Millsteins and Irelands was often disrupted. An example of this was when a group of people recklessly drove their car through Mrs. Millstein's hedges onto her front lawn, using it as a circular driveway. Another incident occured in the middle of the night, when Mrs. Millstein was woken by a bag lady knocking on her front door. The lady asked her where the famous house was, and for a cup of coffee. Mrs. Millstein refused both requests and called the police. The bag lady left, but before leaving, she took the time to slash the porch screen door. These are just two of the many incidents that the Millsteins have had to face.

The Irelands have been just as unlucky. There are always uninvited visitors on their property, snooping around and taking pictures. Because of the many tresspassers who violate their privacy, the Irelands were forced to invest in a fence, which proved to be a financial burden. And, unfortunately, this costly fence proved to be of little help. One day Mr. Ireland returned home to find three women having a picnic lunch in his backyard. It seemed that they thought, like many others, that they were on public property, and went as far as insisting it was a state park. This incident does not stand alone. There have also been numerous broken windows and damage done to other parts of the house during the past years, and the Irelands and Millsteins still feel threatened. They are hesitant in leaving their houses for long periods of time. "You never know who may come and break in or something." (4)

Lucky for them, they have not had any serious burglaries since the disturbances began. This is because of the tremendous support of the Amityville Police Department. "Sometimes it was 10 times a day in the beginning," said Mrs. Ireland of her phone calls made to the police department when in need of protection due to vandals. (5) The police were called frequently and at all hours of the day and night. They always responded quickly and were of great help. Everyone feels grateful to the police for all they've done, and Mrs. Millstein seems to sum it all up: "Amityville Police, as far as I'm concerned, are wonderful." (6) Everyone feels safe in knowing that they are being protected by the Amityville Police. The present police chief, Ken Greguski, has been annoyed with the harassment the town has had to face, and says "we're here to try to protect the people here in the community..." (7)

Not only is officer Greguski the current Chief of Police in Amityville, he was also the first person, aside from Ronnie DeFeo, in the house after the murders. The thought of entering the house and discovering the bodies shook him up. "It brought tears to my eyes. I had young children myself." (8)

To this date, there are still curious passerbys who wish to see the house, although few actually find it. Physically, the house has changed in order to throw the visitors off the track. It has been repainted a new

color, the number has changed, and tall trees blockade a camera len's view. Most people must resort to asking local youths for directions. Speaking for the youths of the community, we can say that no one in search of the house is ever pointed in the right direction.

Many people feel annoyed and bitter with the commercialism brought to the town. No one wanted this to be Amityville's claim to fame, even if it does mean getting on the map.

The house still stands. There are no ghosts, no spirits, no demons. The tragedy is not a haunted house, a scary book, or a horror movie. It is the corruption of Amityville, The Friendly Bay Village.

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ENDNOTES

1. Jay Anson, The Amityville Horror - A True Story, (Prentice-Hall Inc., N.J., copyright 1977).
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